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THE CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH
VIEW OF NAPOLEON

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VIEW OF NAPOLEON

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TO
MY GRANDMOTHER
MRS. W. Y. SELLAR

PREFACE

I DESIRE to acknowledge my obligations for many important suggestions to Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, to whom I owe the choice of this subject; to Professor Oman, and to Dr. J. H. Rose, Litt.D. To the last named, indeed, I am indebted not only for much invaluable advice, but also for the important material contained in his two recent works, *Pitt and the Great War* and *Pitt and Napoleon*.

Glasgow 1914.

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INTRODUCTION

To us the Epoch of the Revolution, the Empire, and the Great War appears, through the mist of a century, as an heroic age in which men as well as events assume a grandeur to which some of them perhaps had little claim. Even the generals who opposed Napoleon seem almost to reach the heroic level, because they were associated, however discreditably, with his grand strategic achievements.

To turn from these ideas to the contemporary letters, speeches, newspapers, memoirs, etc. of England is to descend once more to earth. We find these men of more than human mould discussed, ridiculed, caricatured. We find wretched pamphleteers exclaiming against the bestowal of the epithet "great" on Napoleon; we find newspaper scribblers criticizing the operations of Moore and Wellington. Yet, before we can form a really adequate idea of the attitude of England during this epoch, it is necessary to take up the standpoint of the men of the age, to accept their limitations of view and to understand their motives. It would be the greatest mistake to imagine that Pitt and Fox and Castlereagh or the mass of Englishmen could hold the same view of Napoleon as we hold nowadays. We must always remember that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the lapse of time is a corrective to opinion rather than a perverter of it.

For example, to the mind of almost all Englishmen of the present day, the attempt of Henry V on the French crown was an unjustifiable outrage. To our ancestors five hundred years ago it, no doubt, appeared a just assertion of unquestionable rights. A contemporary view is rarely a just one. In the first place, under the impression of great events, people are apt to pronounce stray opinions with utterly insufficient knowledge, a tendency which appears to increase with the spread of modern journalism. In October 1911 everybody was ready to condemn the action of Italy in Tripoli—possibly in twenty years we shall know the real rights and wrongs of the case. This tendency is very obvious in the contemporary records of 1796–1815. In the second place, contemporary history is often so discoloured by passion as to be barely recognizable; and this is especially true of a period when dislike was quickened by fear into hatred. It is too much to expect an impartial survey of Napoleon's qualities in an Englishman, when any moment he might be across the Channel with a hundred thousand men. It is easy for us, at the safe distance of a century, to blame the English Government for their treatment of Napoleon at St. Helena, the English rulers for their aristocratic prejudices, the English press for their libellous attacks: in their places and at their time we should have probably acted much as they did. It is always a great disadvantage to contemporary history that, whereas history should be written in a detached and unbiased spirit, contemporary records are influenced by momentary passion or prejudice.

Finally, events must have stood the test of time before we can form a proper estimate, either of them, or of the actors in them. To prove the greatness of Cavour or Bismarck we have only to point to the Italy or Germany of to-day, and the real significance of Napoleon's work was not clearly visible until many years after his death. Thus contemporary history lacks the best criterion of truth.

All these deficiencies are conspicuous in the authorities I have used—and I may here say that with only one exception of any importance, I have confined myself almost entirely to what was said or written during the period 1796–1821. The one important exception is the *Foreign Reminiscences* of Lord Holland, in which he transcribes notes written immediately on hearing of Napoleon's death, so they are as near as possible to being contemporary, and are so interesting and important that it is impossible to resist using them. Another exception is Cobbett's *George IV*, which I have regarded as practically giving Cobbett's view of fifteen years earlier.

The difficulty of dealing with a subject of such infinite variety as this is to prevent one's treatment of it from becoming chaotic. Ideas are never so easy to handle as facts. In the first place, it is quite impossible to disentangle the view of Napoleon from the view of the events in which he was the prime mover; it is equally impossible, owing to the changes of opinion consequent on these events, to ignore their chronological order. I have therefore thought fit to deal with the English views of the great events of the period as they occurred, and have thus divided this estimate into chronological sections.

A second difficulty in dealing with opinions is their variety; it is hard to define accurately "The Tory view" or "the Whig view." Opinions in most matters incline towards shading into each other, and the epithet Whig embraces principles and ideas as widely asunder as those of Coleridge are from those of Hobhouse.

There is one more point. It may be argued that especial weight ought to be given to those who came into personal contact with Napoleon. I admit the importance of their impressions for externals, *e. g.* for rebutting or proving the charge that Napoleon was "not a gentleman," but for anything of deeper moment I think their testimony has been overrated. In his interviews with Englishmen we cannot get away from the idea that Napoleon was an inveterate *poseur*, save when he lost control of his temper; and Englishmen rarely carried away with them any valuable impression of him except with regard to his appearance, voice or manners.

Turning now to the principal authorities of the period, much that is illuminating is to be found in the speeches of the really great politicians, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Windham—otherwise the Parliamentary Debates are for the most part rather barren of interest; much sound criticism in the Diaries or Correspondence of such diplomatists as Castlereagh, Malmesbury, Sir A. Paget and Cornwallis. Of periodicals, *The Times* and the *Quarterly* give the Tory view, and the *Edinburgh* gives that of the Whigs and also some excellent military criticism. Unfortunately the importance of *The Times* is greatly diminished by its violence and its prejudices. The

function of newspapers is ultra-writing; and ultra-writing, though it has its temporary uses, is valueless to the historian. Of Memoirs, those of Romilly, Horner, Croker and Sidmouth give plenty of interesting contemporary letters, and the Fortescue papers—in the Historical MSS. Commission Report—are also valuable, while the letters as well as the works of important literary men, such as Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, are always worth consideration. Most of the “Histories of Bonaparte” are worthless, yet there are one or two, such as those of Burdon (1805) and H. Scott (1814), which rise considerably above the rest in critical power and grasp of politics. J. Scott’s *Visit to Paris in 1814*, despite its patronizing tone, throws useful light on the later period.

Views, friendly throughout or even not bitterly hostile to Napoleon, are perhaps the most interesting, but they are also hardest to find. Their tale is soon told—Hobhouse’s admirable *Letters from Paris in 1815*, in which, it must be confessed, he seems to go rather too far on the other side, the side of admiration, Lord Holland’s judicial *Memoirs* and *Reminiscences*, some speeches of Whitbread, a few remarks by other Radicals, some fragments from Hazlitt, and one or two phrases of Byron in his pro-Napoleonic moods.

Little profit can be gained from studying the caricatures. It is astounding that Cruikshank and Gillray have enjoyed so great a reputation for caricatures which are not only coarse and repulsive, but dull and lacking in humour, far inferior to contemporary continental efforts and an extraordinary

contrast with the refined cartoons of our modern *Punch*. What the caricaturists expressed on canvas, the pamphleteers expressed on paper. Most of their efforts are deplorable; with their dull rodomontade, heavy eloquence and noisy mediocrity, it is hard adequately to describe either them or their rather higher counterparts, the writers of short histories of Napoleon. After wading through one or two of them, after enduring their ridiculous apostrophes, "Beloved countrymen!" "Defenders of Liberty and George!" one feels that italics and the word "Briton" ought not to be allowed in print. It may be noticed in parenthesis that the pamphleteers and caricaturists really libel their own countrymen worse than they do Bonaparte. John Bull is represented as the incarnation of brutality and stupidity. It has been remarked that a statue should be raised to Gillray for his services towards the overthrow of Napoleon. It would be much more to the point if he were hanged in effigy as the traducer of his countrymen.

CHAPTER I
THE RISE OF BONAPARTE

SECTION I

ITALY AND EGYPT

SAVE in histories written several years after, when he had become really famous, we hear little of Bonaparte before the Egyptian expedition. The probable reason for this silence was that people were now accustomed to successful Republican generals, and therefore did not pay as much attention to the Italian as to the German campaign in 1796-7: Moreau was probably a more central figure than Bonaparte until the Preliminaries at Leoben. Therefore it comes about that, though the "Histories" written about 1803 are full of the Italian campaign, they confine themselves almost entirely to atrocities.¹ The chief contemporary notices about him are a remark of Malmesbury² which declares him to be "a clever, desperate Jacobin, even terrorist"; a quatrain sent by Lord Mornington to Pitt, composed in August 1796, on hearing of Austrian successes³:—

¹ It is a relief to find Scott, who, however, wrote in 1814, discrediting the horrible story that Bonaparte buried his wounded alive; he also cast doubt on the El Arish and Jaffa incidents; and in the Syrian campaign compares Bonaparte favourably with Djezzar Pasha.

² Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, November 1796: Vol. III. p. 308.

³ *Pitt and the Great War*, p. 461.

“ Mantua Vurmisero¹ gaudet, Rovereda Davido,¹
 Et Verona tibi Quosdanovice¹ patet.
 Væ mihi—raptor ait Gallus—ne forte per Alpes,
 Heu ! *Bona pars* in rem cogor abire malam.”

a comparison made by Fox² between Bonaparte and Marlborough; and a sentence from Burke's *Letter on the Affairs of Ireland*, which runs : “ It appears to me that the Protestant Directory of Paris as statesmen and the Protestant hero Bonaparte as a general have done more to destroy the said Pope and all his adherents in all their capacities than the Junta in Ireland has been ever able to effect.” Even in jest the term “ Protestant hero ” could be applied with as much truth to Bonaparte as to Frederick the Great. There is evidence, however, that an admiration for the young conqueror was growing up. Miss Williams,³ in her first letter from Paris (1815), confesses that at this time (1797) she admired Bonaparte for his modesty after his splendid victories in the battles of liberty, his simplicity, his disdain for applause; and even the *coup d'état* of Brumaire did not shake her credulity. But this was not the prevalent view; for the plunder of Italy, and the unprovoked aggression on Switzerland rapidly alienated that part of English opinion which had previously regarded Bonaparte's success as the triumph of liberty. It was the former which was the first cause of Wordsworth's hostility to Bonaparte, and the latter which roused Mackintosh's fiercest resent-

¹ The Austrian generals, Würmser, Davidovich, Quosdanovich.

² *Correspondence*, August 16, 1797 : Vol. III. p. 271.

³ *Narrative*, p. 7.

ment against him. In his speech for Peltier, he emphasizes the liberty of the small states, *e. g.* the Republic of Geneva, before the Revolution,¹ describes the Swiss as "the martyrs of real independence and of real liberty,"² and stigmatizes the invasion of Switzerland as "that unparalleled scene of guilt and enormity; that unprovoked aggression against an innocent country which had been the sanctuary of peace and liberty for three centuries."³ After the Italian campaign is over, we find the *Anti-Jacobin* turning its ferocious pen upon Bonaparte. It clearly regards him as a characteristic Jacobin, differing in degree, not in nature, from the others. It identifies him with the Spirit of the Revolution, and says that the Jacobin poet might chant his prowess in his loftiest strain of exultation. It goes on to add a few personal touches. On December 4, 1797, it wonders how Bonaparte can reconcile his new pose as "the protector of nobility, the enemy of exaggerated doctrines and violent measures," with his former professions and conduct; which it more explicitly describes in another passage as those of an "unprincipled robber"; whose presence is needed at Restadt to begin the "system of pillage and confiscation," which is clearly avowed by the French to be at the bottom of it. A few remarks on his brutal treatment of his Austrian prisoners and his probable barbarity if he gets into England complete the picture. Very different was the attitude of the Revolutionary societies. On January 25, 1798, "the Secret Committee" of England wrote

¹ *Peltier's Trial*, pp. 85-8.

² *Ibid.* p. 136.

³ *Ibid.* p. 167.

to the French Directory to this effect: "We now only await with impatience to see the Hero of Italy and the brave veterans of the great nation. Myriads will hail their arrival with shouts of joy; they will soon finish the glorious campaign."¹

But the *Anti-Jacobin* does not regard Bonaparte as a liberating Hero. Following out the prophecy of Burke, it remarks² on the probability of a military despotism, though it considers Barras, depending on Bonaparte, to be the prime mover in the plot. Even earlier in September, Malmesbury remarked³ on the understanding between Bonaparte and the Directory. Bonaparte, he says, sent 50,000 men into the south of France to "influence the elections." More original is another suggestion of his a few days later.⁴ To Windham's idea that France must be master of Europe, "I oppose the probability of Bonaparte erecting Italy into a kingdom for himself. . . ." This is quite the sort of suggestion we might expect from so shrewd a diplomatist as Malmesbury. Right up to the days of Elba, Napoleon was more in touch with Italy than with his Swiss, Dutch or German possessions.

The *Anti-Jacobin* does not look with apprehension on a purely military despotism, "the least unfavourable issue both for France and for the world," expects a *coup d'état*, but sees in Augereau a counterpoise to Bonaparte's views. Nevertheless the latter is still "the favourite." After remarking that he

¹ *Pitt and the Great War*, p. 349.

² December 11, 1797.

³ *Diaries and Correspondence*, Vol. III. p. 537.

⁴ *Ibid.* September 24, 1797, p. 590.

appears to have been forgotten in France and no one knows his whereabouts, it adds : " May this incognito lead to any great event which will again place him in the foremost rank of observation at the same time that it may change the whole face of public affairs in France ? " ¹

Virulent and prejudiced as it is, it would be a mistake to rank the *Anti-Jacobin* with the ordinary Tory periodicals or pamphlets of the time. Several clever men, notably Canning, wrote for it, and some of its prophecies are remarkably accurate. In fact one of its forecasts (March 12, 1798) was fulfilled almost to the letter, seven and a half years subsequently. After saying that the plunder of Great Britain, if conquered, would be used for the destruction of Northern Europe, the paper goes on to ask : " If foiled, can it be doubted that the Directory will immediately endeavour to indemnify themselves for the loss of the booty they had promised themselves by devoting the whole of Germany to the fate which they had prepared for Great Britain ? "

Even when he had gone to Egypt, he was still merely the successful general going on a Republican crusade, a point brought out by the *Anti-Jacobin* in some rather clever satire. Various were the motives attributed to this expedition, both at the moment and subsequently : at first even its destination was not at all clear. Some suggested the Black Sea, others thought with dread of Ireland. When it was finally known that he had reached Egypt, apprehensions were felt for India—generally considered to be the ultimate object of attack—as well as for Turkey.

¹ February 26, 1798.

While Buckingham¹ feared very much "that the Turk will add one more to the melancholy chapter of fraternized governments," Dundas² thought that Nelson's victory at the Nile "comes too late to save India"; though, later on, he took a more optimistic view, yet at the end of the year he still dreaded a desperate push for India on the part of Bonaparte. But other observers, Addington in England and Mornington in India, saw how decisive the Battle of the Nile was: "Bonaparte's plans are frustrated," writes the one,³ and the other's remark,⁴ "Ex illo fluere et retro sublapsa referri Res Jacobin," showed that he considered the crusading Republic to be represented by Bonaparte.

It is curious to find Napoleon's admirers denying his designs on India. It seems to have been their cue to ignore his desire for "ships, commerce, colonies," and they failed to grasp the kind of mystic Orientalism which was one of his dominating motives. Thus Lord Holland⁵ gave as his motives, "ambition, love of glory, and consciousness that his indiscreet language had brought him into danger at home," and Fox and Hazlitt always disbelieved in the grandiose schemes of Eastern conquest attributed to Bonaparte. Their attitude seems largely to have been determined by the "Malta question" of 1803. Thus Fox⁶ uses a chain of reasoning to the effect that Malta was not essential to the security of Egypt; nor

¹ *Fortescue Papers*, August 26, 1798: Vol. IV. 286.

² *Ibid.* September 28, 1798: Vol. IV. p. 328.

³ *Addington Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 212.

⁴ *Ibid.* November 19, 1798: Vol. I. p. 217.

⁵ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 257.

⁶ *Speeches*, May 24, 1803: Vol. VI. p. 508.

was Egypt to that of India, nor India to that of Great Britain. He goes on to stigmatize the expedition as the "most romantic and idle undertaking that ever was entered on by France." Fox never thoroughly understood Napoleon, but Hazlitt takes up exactly the same standpoint in his *Advice to a Patriot*, 1806.

Though his friends failed to grasp the significance of Bonaparte's ideas, his enemies succeeded in partly so doing. Even the author of *An Appeal to the People* (1803) hits the mark when he attributes the expedition to the fact that "fancy transported Bonaparte to those days when an Alexander, a Pyrrhus, a Hannibal or a Cæsar traversed the most distant climes to spread the triumphs of their fame"; and the contemporary *Anti-Jacobin* has much the same idea. A rhymed satire¹ on the expedition in this periodical gives a very fair travesty of his gigantesque Oriental schemes; it laughs at the savants bringing along their Rights of Man with them, and suggests a picture of Bonaparte with "tribes of Armenians and Jews," etc. etc., finally crossing the Indus and choking "the wretched Mogul in his mother's own garters." The same paper produced another satire,² this time in prose, purporting to come from Bonaparte to the Commandant at Zante, describing such events as the restoration of the Jews to Judæa, the foundation of the Caffrarian and Equinoctial Republics—"In manners and civilization Africa much resembles France"—and prophesying the conquest of India, with its inevitable corollary, the setting up of columns inscribed "Here London stood."

¹ June 25, 1798.

² *Ibid.*

Finally, it was felt long after Napoleon had returned to Europe that there was a distinct danger of his return to Egypt, and to the Orient generally. Sir A. Paget (October 23, 1800)¹ dreads a French attack from Italy to "Greece and Constantinople, countries already prepared for their doctrines." A few months later Mr. T. Jackson,² from Rome, says that the resources of Italy are to be employed by Bonaparte in his projects on Egypt, while in 1803 Whitworth³ maintains that he will not abandon his views on Egypt: "All his feelings are engaged in that object": of course it is to the Egyptian expedition that the Malta question owed its importance. On February 12, 1806, Sidney Smith wrote to Windham, then Secretary for War: "Knowing Bonaparte as I know him,⁴ I can easily imagine his thirst to realize a 'speculation manquée' on Constantinople and the route to India. He will be surrounded by Polish adventurers and Venetian navigators of the Black Sea, who will suggest plans for shutting the Russians out of the Mediterranean, attacking Sebastopol, etc. These he will propose in a dictatorial style to the Porte, backed by his submissive slave Austria, and in case of their refusal he will send his Egyptian renegado comrade Menou, with an army to garrison Byzantium and the Dardanelles, while his Venetian flotilla creeps along the coast of the Morea and carries sailors to man the Turkish fleet, by way of balancing his loss at

¹ *Paget Papers*, Vol. I. p. 276.

² *Ibid.* March 31, 1801; Vol. I. p. 336.

³ *Despatches*, February 7, 1803, p. 60.

⁴ This conceited phrase is characteristic.

Trafalgar.”¹ Even in 1808 the Hon. J. W. Ward² declared in Parliament that Bonaparte was meditating an attack on Egypt; and in the same year Mr. John Kelso³ mentioned the dislike of the natives of Bourbon and the Île de France to Napoleon, adding, “Napoleon having settled Europe begins to turn his thoughts again to India, which he can reach through these two islands.” Thus it is clear that after the Egyptian expedition Englishmen felt they had to deal with an ambition and a genius from which anything might be expected. Finally, the expedition enabled the pamphleteers to cater for the public taste, by depicting Bonaparte as a typical Oriental conqueror, hypocritically embracing Mohammedanism, displaying the most odious tyranny, barbarity and callousness, finally baffled by the honest bravery of a few British sailors under Sir Sidney Smith.⁴ Most of the “atrocities of the Corsican dæmon” are placed in Egypt and Palestine, whence it was hard to obtain refuting evidence, and where the name of Sir Robert Wilson⁵ added weight to the calumnies.

¹ *Windham Papers*, Vol. II. p. 293.

² *Parl. Debates*, February 29, 1808.

³ *Castlereagh Letters, Despatches, etc.*, March 20, 1808: Vol. VIII. p. 166.

⁴ The repulse of Napoleon from Acre by Sir Sidney Smith has been regarded as one of the most decisive turning points in modern history. No contemporary observer thought so until March 1810, when Whitbread declared that, had not Sir Sidney Smith checked the conqueror of the world at Acre, the position of Europe would have been infinitely worse.

⁵ Wilson took part in Abercrombie's successful expedition to Egypt, and in 1802 published *A History of the British Expedition to Egypt*, in which he fully and imaginatively described all Bonaparte's atrocities.

SECTION II

BRUMAIRE AND THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF THE CONSULATE

It is with the *coup d'état* of Brumaire that Napoleon steps into the foremost place in the European stage, a position which he was to keep for fifteen years. Hitherto he had been merely one of France's many successful generals, more ambitious, brilliant and bold than the rest, but hardly a force to be reckoned with in European politics. Then came Brumaire, and Europe woke up to find itself face to face with a man of acknowledged talent for war and other abilities—which were to be supposed even if not so well known—as the supreme head of the French Government. All through the years 1800–1803 we meet with innumerable references to Bonaparte.

Of the *coup d'état* itself the different parties naturally took different views. The Tories, the foes of the Revolution, were rather jubilant, not from any friendship to Bonaparte, but because they thought it would weaken France, and also, as Cornwallis¹ put it, "Every Revolution that happens in France must be so far useful as it tends to discredit the plan of putting down established governments ;

¹ *Cornwallis Correspondence*, November 29, 1799 : Vol. III. p. 148.

but I should doubt otherwise whether the Consular will be more favourable to us than the Directorial government;” and Pitt¹ wrote, “The new Constitution is a more undisguised contrivance for giving absolute power than I expected, and as such must, I think, do good.” Canning, more royalist than Pitt, was still more pleased. He saw in it the first step towards the restoration of monarchy; he thought that Bonaparte proposed to bring back the Bourbons, preferably Louis Philippe, for the sake of his own personal advantage.² How far did this theory influence the Grenville reply,³ which declared that the restoration of the Bourbons would be the best guarantee of peace?

Miss Berry, though not a Tory, takes up at first (November 19, 1799) a Tory attitude.⁴ “For my part I think it will be better dealing with one or even three rogues than 500. But it will in all probability shortly end in Bonaparte’s assassination;” later, January 2, 1800, she modifies her opinion of him so far as to say, “What think you of the man Bonaparte, absolute King of France, quietly established in the Tuileries? For my part I admire him, and think if he can keep his place he does his country a service.”

By February Pitt⁵ acknowledges that Bonaparte is practically a king, with the difference that he wields a sword instead of sceptre, and that he is heir to the Revolution. The Tories would never

¹ *Fortescue Papers*, December 22, 1799: Vol. VI. p. 84.

² *Pitt and Napoleon*, p. 320. ³ See p. 22.

⁴ *Journals and Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 105.

⁵ *Speeches*, February 3, 1800: Vol. III. p. 133.

admit that Bonaparte, even in his most monarchical acts, was not a Jacobin, whereas in later years the Whigs, detesting his actions—or, in the case of his admirers, disapproving some of them—laid stress on his liking for monarchy. They could not identify the Revolution, which they admired, with Bonaparte, whom most of them hated.

The opinions of the latter party are very divergent. Thus Coleridge and Burdon, who in other respects represent the same shade of opinion, exactly contradict each other. The former¹ disapproves of Bonaparte's means of obtaining power, but approves the use he makes of it. The latter² admires the *coup d'état*, but not its results. The Ultra-Whig view comes from Southey. On January 9, 1800,³ we find him writing: "The Corsican has offended me, and even his turning out the Mamelukes will not atone for his rascally constitution. The French are children with the physical force of men, unworthy and therefore incapable of freedom;" and he goes on to add: "Bonaparte has made me Anti-Gallican," the most characteristic Whig view of the period—and so, later on, and especially in the case of the Whigs, Anti-Gallicanism became merged in Anti-Bonapartism. At the moment, however, the general Whig idea was that France needed a new government owing to the misdeeds of the Directory, and that Bonaparte gave her this. Thus Fox in Parliament (February 3, 1800) said that Bonaparte thought it necessary to reform the Government, "and he did

¹ *Essays on his Own Times*, April 21, 1800: Vol. II. p. 405.

² *Character of Bonaparte*.

³ *Letters*, Vol. II. p. 246.

reform it just in the way in which a military man may be expected to carry out a reform—he seized on the whole authority himself,” and to prove that the people of France are quite likely to acquiesce in Bonaparte’s usurpation, he compares him with Cromwell, who owed his success to the “splendour of his talents, the vigour of his administration, the high tone with which he spoke to foreign nations, the success of his arms and the character which he gave to the English nation.” Thus, too, Sheridan,¹ while admitting that Bonaparte may justly be called a usurper, says that France required the vigorous hand of a dictator; while the extent of his power is incompatible with the liberties of France, it is not greater than is necessary to protect the Republic from its numerous enemies. He then panegyryzes the measures of Bonaparte, “this atheist, perfidious and devoid of morality, this military tyro.” “But, sir,” he exclaims with his wonted eloquence, “we have seen religion obtain a tolerant exemption in her favour under the Government of this atheist; we have seen the faith of treaties observed under the Government of this perfidious adventurer; the arts and sciences find protection under the Government of this plunderer; the sufferings of humanity have been alleviated under this ferocious usurper; the arms of France have been led to victory by this tyro in the art and practice of war.”

Even Sir James Mackintosh in his speech for Peltier has to acknowledge the expediency of Brumaire. At the end of the Revolution he says there

¹ *Speeches*, June 27, 1800; Vol. V. p. 163.

remained only one principle strong enough to hold society together, incompatible with liberty though it was, and "even unfriendly to civilization," *i. e.* military power. Therefore Bonaparte usurped power, though "usurpation in its strongest moral sense is scarcely applicable to a period of lawless and savage anarchy." The guilt of the usurpation belongs to the authors of those confusions. Therefore the French people submit to any power which yields them repose. This is a remarkable admission from the author of *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*.

At the end of the year Bonaparte sent his famous letter to George III containing overtures of peace. His motives for so doing are brought out by Coleridge¹—they were partly to give the French something new, partly to vindicate his consistency, above all to unite France. The informality of this letter, the presumption of the Corsican in writing directly to the King, the neglect of diplomatic conventions, shocked English official circles (though Pitt² thought the letter civil, and considered that England might treat with Bonaparte's Government if it established itself firmly), and Lord Grenville sent back an insufferably haughty and characteristically tactless reply, even in George III's opinion, "much too strong." During the course of the year the question of peace was hotly debated both in Parliament and the country. Opinion was perhaps equally divided as to the advisability of rejecting Bonaparte's offers, and while on the one hand Fox and Sheridan, with

¹ *Essays*, March 13, 1800 : Vol. II. p. 384.

² *Cornwallis Correspondence*, December 31 : Vol. III. p. 155.

more than their customary eloquence, attacked the Ministry, the other side had its champions and its arguments, little if at all inferior.

Fox, above all, combats the idea of a restoration of the Bourbons, who have always been hostile to England, and Sheridan takes up the same line; "France as a republic may be a bad neighbour, but than monarchical France a more foul and treacherous neighbour never was." ¹ Further, Fox attributes the worst acts of Bonaparte, viz. his aggrandizements, to the Bourbon tradition: "Convenances morales et physiques"—Bonaparte's justification of the annexation of Savoy—"a most Bourbon-like phrase." ²

Further, these Whig statesmen consider that peace would be to Bonaparte's advantage. "Peace," declares Fox on February 3, 1800, "is not unfriendly to military despotism," and goes on to instance Augustus Cæsar. He suggests that the fall of Bonaparte might be followed by the rise of Berthier, and asks, "May he not think his measure of glory is full?"—a curiously erroneous idea of Napoleon's character. Finally, Bonaparte must fear the hostility of rival generals and must see that France requires a respite.

Again, they lay great stress on Bonaparte's moderation, which, Fox writes in a letter (October 1800), is both to the interest of his glory and his

¹ *Sheridan Speeches*, February 17, 1800: Vol. V. p. 133. Hatred of the Bourbons and Hapsburgs was a dominant portion of the Whig creed. Southey, even after his practical conversion to Toryism, still retains this shred of prejudice from his old faith.

² *Ibid.* February 17, 1800: Vol. VI. p. 391.

power; and earlier, February 3, 1800, he earnestly recommended in his speech on the peace that England should seize this moment of moderation "now when he is not so secure as he will be," for Bonaparte is unlikely to grant such terms "to baffled insolence, to humiliated pride," as he would now. Sheridan¹ instances his negotiations with the Emperor as a further proof of magnanimity and of moderation, a moderation also shown in his domestic policy: "Bonaparte has shown his country that his object is to maintain the power he has attained by the moderation of his Government, and when he has achieved the liberty of France and his enemies have afforded him the opportunity of turning his attention to its internal regulations, he will in giving it liberty, impart to it all the blessings of civilized peace."

In conclusion, the Whigs regarded Bonaparte as essentially a friend to peace. "Not only peace but a good understanding can be had with Bonaparte," is Fox's expression even a year later, and to Sheridan the "total renunciation of Jacobin principles in Bonaparte's letter is one more proof of his inclination to peace."² These, then, were the grounds which made them, in Fox's words, regard the refusal of Bonaparte's offers as "faults in my judgment without a parallel in history."³

On the other hand, the Ministry laid great stress on the lack of security involved in a negotiation with France—an expression pooh-poohed by Sheridan,

¹ In the same debate (February 17), *Speeches*, Vol. V. p. 137.

² *Ibid.* p. 138.

³ *Correspondence*, January 24, 1801; Vol. III. p. 186.

who asked what security we could have obtained from Louis XIV. Nevertheless, Pitt was able to bring up a gallant array of arguments, marked by great personal acerbity against Bonaparte. First, the insatiable love of aggrandizement inherent in the French Revolution, but belonging most of all to Bonaparte; secondly, the instability of the French; thirdly, Bonaparte's untrustworthy character, his breaches of treaties,¹ his perfidy to the French Republican Constitution, his treachery to the states of Italy, above all to Venice; fourthly, his interest in engaging England in a separate negotiation, thus breaking up the Continental Coalition and paralyzing the arms of Austria and Russia, and then on some pretext of indemnification breaking off the negotiation. Finally, the insecurity of Bonaparte's position: "His hold upon France is the sword and no other;" all parties must detest him; military despotism is never stable; public opinion is the only *sure* support of Government. Therefore Pitt concludes that we must put Bonaparte on his probation, and, to quote his own unfortunate phrase, "we must pause"; this expression gave Fox an opening for one of the finest pieces of rhetorical irony in the language. Other Ministerialists adopted similar, though less forcible language. Windham,² in the same series of debates, maintained that Bonaparte was probably insincere, and that negotiation would certainly countenance and consolidate his power. Grenville,³ as befits the inditer of the contemptuous

¹ This was denied stoutly by Sheridan in the same debate.

² *Speeches*, February 17, 1800: Vol. I. p. 322.

³ In a letter dated November 30, 1799 (to be found in the *Fortescue Papers*, Vol. VI. p. 53) we see his private view of

epistle, has great confidence in the situation abroad, which indeed was his justification for sending it; and through all the writings and speeches of the Tories runs the idea, exactly opposite to that of the Whigs, that for Bonaparte "omnis salus bello est." Even at this lapse of time, after reading the speeches of Pitt and Fox on the peace with Bonaparte, we cannot say which is the more convincing. We are in the position of Dionysus in the *Frogs*; for when we read the one, we feel that his arguments are irrefutable until we turn to the other; and this uncertainty is not only due to the oratorical ability of these towering Parliamentary figures, but also to the fact that much was to be said on either side. While Fox was probably right in wishing for peace, Pitt was not wrong in distrusting Bonaparte. So we find that opinion in England is fairly evenly divided. Sheridan¹ indeed claims that popular opinion is on the Whig side, that Englishmen rejoice in Bonaparte's victories as bringing them nearer peace, that Bonaparte's overtures prevent them from stigmatizing him as warlike. Miss Berry² also comments on the inconsistency of the attitude of the English press, which had previously declared that we could

Bonaparte's position. "Bonaparte's object is understood to be the establishing a sort of American Constitution with himself for President. The success of this must evidently depend upon his influence with the army, and on his keeping the Jacobins in subjection by employing his troops in sufficient force in the interior." Therefore, Grenville concludes, he will try to make peace so as to have troops to spare.

¹ *Speeches*, June 27, 1800: Vol. V. p. 166.

² *Journals and Correspondence*, January 2, 1800: Vol. II. p. 110.

not make peace with an absolutely democratic Government. "Now that an absolutely aristocratical Government is established," she proceeds, "what is it to us whether Louis Capet or Louis Bonaparte is at the head?" and Lord Cornwallis,¹ in May 1800, gloomily remarks on "the unwise answer of Lord Grenville." Nevertheless, a great mass of opinion, often, it is true, unthinking opinion, supported the Government, which could always count upon the essentially British hatred of owning oneself beaten, and on the distrust of Bonaparte sown by the pamphleteers and caricaturists.

The dread of invasion promptly recurred after Brumaire. Fox wrote to Grey saying that if the French land, our slavery is decided, and the only question is, "Who is to be tyrant?" "In this question I should prefer George III. Those who think there is any consolation in 'Æneæ magni dextra cadis' may prefer Bonaparte."²

But soon attention was transferred to the great events in Italy. The second Coalition had roused high hopes, which at first seemed justified; and though the defeats of the Duke of York near Bergen, the Russian disaster at Zurich, and the return of Bonaparte quenched some of the enthusiasm, there existed, as indeed there always did, a strongly optimistic feeling in England. Therefore in March 1800 we find Grenville *fearing*³ that the war will end in a separate peace with Austria "whenever Bonaparte finds *himself sufficiently pressed* to think

¹ *Correspondence*, May 18, 1800 : Vol. III. p. 236.

² Fox, *Correspondence*, December 1799 : Vol. III. p. 292.

³ *Fortescue Papers*, March 28, 1800 : Vol. VI. p. 186.

it worth his while to give the conditions," an idea which he repeats in April, and even, though with a lower tone, in September; while previously, in February, Pitt considered the French armies weakening and the success of the Coalition probable.

It is hard for us to imagine the conditions of intelligence and communication in those days. Bonaparte disappeared into Switzerland and caused a feeling of vague unrest. No one knew whither he had gone until he reappeared triumphant in the plains of Italy. But before Marengo was fought there was disquiet both in England and at Vienna. From the latter place Minto¹ writes that Melas is embarrassed; in England Buckingham² fears the Austrians will have "to abandon the siege of Genoa to meet Bonaparte, or"—a characteristic touch of Tory depreciation—"rather Berthier." It may be remarked in connection with the siege of Genoa that Massena's character did not appeal to English observers. Lord Keith,³ who signed the capitulation with him, writes: "Massena and I had a hard set too (*sic*)—he is the greatest Brute in Christendom," a distinction which in English opinion was to be wrested from him a few years later by his imperial master. We have no good account of the campaign that ensued. That of Lieutenant Scarratt is prejudiced and worthless: the only point worth noting is that Scarratt attributes the fact that Bonaparte marched in person against the Austrians to his "favourite scheme of universal power." Here

¹ *Fortescue Papers*, June 19, 1800: Vol. VI. p. 250.

² *Ibid.* June 1, 1800: Vol. VI. p. 241.

³ *Paget Papers*, June 5, 1800: Vol. I. p. 229.

Scarratt, for a wonder, is right. A victory was an essential step for Napoleon, and the importance of Marengo does not lie in its being a decisive stroke against the Austrians, for it was Moreau's victory at Hohenlinden which ended the war, but in its confirmation of his power.

As Lord Minto said,¹ Marengo made a total change. Windham had to confess that the Emperor must take the peace which Bonaparte will be so good as to grant him; and his comment, "Shocking business," is typically English. Indeed, the spectacle of the Emperor suing for peace from the Corsican was enough to outrage every decent English tradition, and poor Windham cannot have liked the spectacle of the Austrian marriage in 1810.

Lunéville strengthened this feeling of disgust in the Tory breast. Malmesbury calls it "most inglorious for Austria," and comments on the "insolent, vapouring declaration from the Consuls on this occasion."² Minto³ describes the Emperor as the tool of French projects, foremost of which comes the maritime conspiracy. "The favourite plan of Bonaparte," he declares with some acumen, "is for our total exclusion from the Continent;" and the truth of his remark on the importance of the Adriatic for this scheme is exemplified by Bonaparte's annexation of Illyria and Dalmatia in 1809.

After Lunéville interest shifted to the north, where the maritime league, at the back of which it was easy

¹ *Paget Papers*, July 16, 1800 : Vol. I. p. 250.

² *Malmesbury Diaries and Correspondence*, February 18, 1801 : Vol. IV. p. 10.

³ *Fortescue Papers*, February 25, 1801 : Vol. VI. p. 454.

to discern Bonaparte, caused great consternation. "Terrible" is the word applied to it by Paget; "serious indeed" that of Fox; William Scott¹ writes of the "tremendous mass of force we have to meet in arms, the veteran legions of France lining their own coasts and those of Holland, while a strong naval force keeps us in full employ in the north." Cornwallis says that "with almost all Europe against us, we cannot long exist as a divided nation."²

Hence, the death of Paul of Russia was hailed with joy in England, as a blow to Bonaparte equal in weight to that dealt him by the battle of Alexandria. Paul, who in 1799 had been described by Pitt as that "wise and vigorous and exalted Prince," two years later temporarily usurped the proper place of Bonaparte as the Enemy of Mankind in English opinion;³ and subsequently the two were frequently bracketed as types of despots liable to insane passion.

A question of high importance in the eyes of English observers was the stability, as well as the character of Bonaparte's domestic administration. It was generally perceived that his presence was soon felt in a renewal of French vigour. Only fools like Scarratt rushed in to allege that Bonaparte did not

¹ Addington, *Life and Correspondence*, January 1801: Vol. I. p. 276.

² *Cornwallis Correspondence*, December 30, 1800: Vol. III. p. 317.

³ For a moment it seemed possible that the Court of Prussia might rival Paul and Bonaparte in unpopularity. Writing from Berlin, Lord Carysfort (*Fortescue Papers*, Jan. 17, 1801: Vol. VI. p. 428) actually accuses Queen Louisa (!) of having had "an absolute flirtation with Bonaparte."

change the bad state of France, whereas to the average rational man the improved administration, and above all the centralized concentration of the whole strength of the nation in one man, was the most formidable side of Bonaparte's *régime*. The astounding vitality which he gave to France in 1800 and 1801 is a stock subject with his eulogists. On March 25, 1801, Grey, right up to Waterloo a sympathizer with Bonaparte, contrasted the administration of Pitt with that of the "mighty genius" who, "trusting to the resources of his own mind, restored life and energy to the Government" (of France).

The Tories, on the other hand, unable to impeach the vigour of his sway, attacked it for its absolutism. Malmesbury¹ compares the Government of France under Bonaparte to that of Persia under Kauli-Khan,—“it knows no bounds either moral or civil,—is ruled by no principles,” and declares that “it is ridiculous and criminal to pretend that Bonaparte's ambition is circumscribed.” Another position on which they directed their attacks, the wish perhaps being father to the thought, was the instability of this Government. In the writings of Malmesbury we have manifold suggestions of the danger to Bonaparte's ascendancy involved by the other generals, whom he dare not bring into France. From this time, until his death at Dresden in 1813, Moreau becomes almost a popular hero in England.

¹ *Diaries and Correspondence*, October 29, 1801 : Vol. IV. p. 61. Malmesbury, originally a Portland Whig, had adopted Tory views by 1801.

SECTION III

THE RELATIONS OF BONAPARTE TO THE REVOLUTION

AT this period there first comes into prominence a question which interested contemporary observers during the whole period of the Consulate and the Empire: the relation which Bonaparte bore to the Revolution; was he its champion, representative and child, or was he its destroyer? Putting it succinctly, the Tories, combining a hatred both of Bonaparte and the Revolution, identified them and adopted the first view; the Whigs usually took the second—most of them had admired the Revolution but detested Bonaparte; finally, the small class of his admirers took on the whole the first view of the man, but insisted that his monarchical, *i. e.* Revolution destroying, tendencies, brought about his fall. They could not admit that the Revolution would have fallen of itself. Thus Hobhouse in 1815¹ said it was not the cause that fell, but the man for deserting the cause; and his predilection for monarchy is commented on by his admirers with regret, by the bulk of the Whigs with disgust, by the Tories with malevolent triumph. His first action as Consul with regard to the Revolution, his suppression of the anarchy into which it had degenerated, was

¹ *Letters from Paris.*

usually a theme for praise. In fact, English writers echo the views of a German, quoted by Mr. Alger,¹ who compared the lawlessness of France to a brawl in a beer-shop—Bonaparte came along and said, “Stop that,” and his first act was to extinguish the lights. Coleridge comments on the service that he is doing France by this action, and even the truculent and prejudiced author of *An Appeal to the People* admits his usefulness in “overawing into silence the fury of intestine faction, in restoring order and rekindling credit.”

It was a commonplace among the Whigs and Radicals that Bonaparte owed his tremendous power and success to the Revolution, to the impulse given by popular principles; and therefore the Tories denied the fact. Both parties were thus involved in a contradiction; for the Whigs denied that Bonaparte represented the Revolution, and the Tories declared that he did. Perhaps the view nearest the truth is one given by Canning,² who, to the question, What has made France what she is? replies, “A man; he found in France great physical and moral resources; he had but to turn them to account. *True, and he did so.*” Elsewhere,³ however, he adopts the Tory view in its entirety, and denies the strength of free institutions, *e. g.* when he points out that it was no glorious republic that overthrew Napoleon, but autocratic Russia. Another typical Tory attitude was that taken up by Castlereagh, who always depreciated the strength of

¹ *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives*, p. 158.

² *Speeches*, December, 1802; Vol. II. p. 61.

³ Liverpool Speech, January 10, 1814; Vol. VI. p. 336.

popular enthusiasm. On the other side we find the *Edinburgh Review*¹ roundly declaring that "France has triumphed by the free and unlimited use she has made of the services of her people." *A fortiori*, Radicals, like Cobbett and Hazlitt, whatever be the divergence of their own views towards Napoleon, lay greater stress on this side of his Empire than on any other. His insolent style of speech with regard to the people, says the one,² was extraordinary in "the child and champion of the people," who owed everything to the "wondrous valour and wondrous disinterestedness" of the French people; while Hazlitt³ is eager to declare that the "towering greatness of France" is due to the attacks made on her liberty by the Powers of Europe, and to her convulsive resistance. In his History he half blames Napoleon for not proclaiming a popular war on the invaders in 1814. "He was chargeable with a little professional pedantry in this . . . he wanted some of the Revolutionary boldness at this crisis."

There was another sense, however, in which Englishmen thought that Bonaparte owed his power to the Revolution, a reactionary sense. It was partly connected with the admission which we have noticed above, that Bonaparte did a service to France by suppressing Revolutionary anarchy, and is best expressed in the words of the *Edinburgh Review*:⁴ "Protected as he was by the vast military system he had drawn up before him, *and still more*,

¹ April 1807 : Vol. X. p. 13.

² *George IV*, Vol. I. section 206.

³ *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 365.

⁴ *Edinburgh Review*, April 1814 : Vol. XXIII. p. 27.

*perhaps, by the dread of that chaotic and devouring gulph of Revolution which still yawned behind him*¹ . . . he was unable to maintain his position against an insurgent people." This idea received verification from the observations of Englishmen in Paris in 1802. They could not fail to observe the yearning for tranquillity which prevailed in France, and the confidence in Bonaparte as its bestower.

Nevertheless, before Bonaparte's coronation, the predominating view on the whole was that Bonaparte was the representative of the Revolution. Pitt² spoke of his tremendous power as heir of the Revolution; of his tyranny as the Revolution concentrated. But this power he attributed not to popular impulses, but to his ability to call out the *levée en masse*, and in 1803 Malmesbury,³ that clever diplomatist and accurate observer, regarded the First Consul as still a Jacobin at heart. Of course, this may have been due to the fact that their aristocratic dislike for "the man of the people," and their detestation of the extremes of the Revolution coincided. Lord Folkestone⁴ called the Peace of Amiens "a treaty built on Jacobin principles and confirming Jacobin power." In a letter dated March 10, 1803, Malmesbury discusses the question whether there would be a Jacobinical revival if Bonaparte failed in an invasion. Both in this letter and in one three days later he decides in the negative. His reasons are as follows: "Bonaparte was himself a rank Jacobin

¹ Italics are mine.

² *Speeches*, February 3, 1800: Vol. III. p. 122.

³ *Diaries and Correspondence*, March 13, 1803: Vol. IV. p. 232.

⁴ *Liverpool's Memoirs* (p. 182), May 13, 1802.

with a Jacobin mind, Jacobin principles and Jacobin projects : " he is now merely a Jacobin who had attained his object, and so uses his unbounded power as all Jacobins would do under the circumstances. Therefore it is absurd to say that we have Jacobinism to fear if he falls, as we are suffering from its full force now, especially as now it is full grown, whereas before it was an infant. Nor is it possible to argue from his actions that Bonaparte is not a Jacobin. The characteristic of Jacobinism is to abhor the end it aims at while practising the means, and to abhor its own means when the end is attained. The thief while breaking into your house is a very different person and employs very different means from the thief who has once got possession of it." Bonaparte is in the position of the latter ; hence it comes about that he pillages Italy but decorates his palaces with a luxury surpassing that of Louis XIV. In this admirable exposition we see the idea of Napoleon not as the champion, but as the child of the Revolution,¹ and we can also observe that, as the child, he has inherited all the hatred so freely bestowed on the parent. To Malmesbury Jacobinism is practically wickedness personified.

It is natural that men who hated the Revolution should hate Napoleon as its child. It is less natural that an admirer both of the Revolution and of Napoleon should consider the latter by no means

¹ On January 7, 1809, *The Times* comments on Bonaparte's comparison of the Spanish Junta to the rule of Robespierre : " Who can avoid remarking the signal ingratitude of this vile upstart, this child and champion of Jacobinism, spurning and abusing the cradle from which he rose ? "

intimately connected with the former. Lord Holland, in his *Foreign Reminiscences*, lays stress on Napoleon as the remedy for the Revolution, on Napoleon's idea that the evil created by Revolutionary principles is immediate and certain, the ultimate good uncertain and problematical, on his great objects of "tranquil government and a due administration of justice," on his desire to "heal the wounds of the Revolution and to blend all classes and parties into France." Holland¹ also remarks more than once on the coldness shown by Napoleon to Jacobins, especially conspicuous after the conspiracy of Nivôse, contrasted with his hazardous desire to conciliate royalists, and comments on the deep impression left on his mind by the horrors of the Revolution—the dread of their revival led him towards a tendency to "assimilate his Government in too many particulars to the antient order of things," and to rest his power on an unrevolutionary basis. Yet even from this we can see that Holland considered him as the Child of the Revolution, and thought his conduct towards it unnatural and at times impolitic. "Like our own Elizabeth, his principles and his temper were at variance with his position." Undoubtedly the more extreme Whigs were alienated by the unjust treatment of the Jacobins after Nivôse. Napoleon had used this plot—in reality a royalist one—as an excuse for attacking the Jacobins.

More typically Whig is the view of Sheridan. This politician largely shared in Fox's apprehensions; "I do not fear French principles, but I have a

¹ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 216.

very wholesome dread of French power." He too admired the Revolution, but distrusted the military despotism which succeeded it: "My alarms begin when those of some people cease," were his words on May 14, 1802. In the first place he welcomes the *coup d'état*. In 1800 he declares that Bonaparte renounces Jacobinical principles and has condemned Jacobinical excesses,¹ but in 1802 we find him saying² that the example of successful ambition in Bonaparte is far more dangerous, in that it must attract the people more than "the exhibitions of riot and murder, unsociality and ferocity of manners." And this opposition between Bonaparte and Jacobinism in Sheridan's mind is brought out still more clearly at the end of the year. He asks³ why those people who say that they only fear France when she approaches under the guise of Jacobinism should be afraid now that it has been killed by Bonaparte—as is shown by his conduct to the Italians, whom he pronounced unfit to govern themselves—for if Jacobinism was like Antæus, Bonaparte, like Hercules, "gave it a true fraternal hug and strangled it."⁴ This passage demonstrates clearly enough that Sheridan not only considered Bonaparte as different from, and more formidable than, the Revolution, but took the "parricide view," that Bonaparte, owing everything to the Revolution, was its final destroyer. Perhaps the

¹ *Speeches*, February 17, 1800: Vol. V. p. 138.

² *Ibid.* May 14, 1802: Vol. V. p. 197.

³ *Ibid.* December 8, 1802: Vol. V. p. 223.

⁴ C. P. Brougham (*Statesmen*, Vol. III. p. 213): "When the child and champion of Jacobinism had laid his parent prostrate in the dust."

distinction between the words "Jacobin" and "Revolutionist" will serve to illustrate the Whig view of Bonaparte. Until Amiens, the Whigs regarded Bonaparte as the latter, but not as the former, indeed, as the enemy of Jacobinism, *i. e.* of extreme and subversive Revolutionary ideas. After Amiens, of course, he appeared to them as neither the one nor the other.

Windham takes an intermediate view. He was a Burkite and not a complete Tory; so he considers Bonaparte neither as a Jacobin nor as an enemy to Jacobinism. He shared in the belief which rapidly gained ground, that Bonaparte's ideas and objects were monarchical. As early as February 17, 1800, he called Bonaparte "both a king and a conqueror," but added that nevertheless the Jacobins do not hate him as a king. He explains the reason in another speech.¹ Bonaparte's Government has two sides: though he has trodden down all the ideas of the French Revolution at home, we must not build any hopes on this, for the French still "have a large assortment of principles ready for foreign markets"—so Bonaparte may be the promoter of Jacobin insurrections in every other country. Thus Windham foretells the Jacobin Empire (which retained that characteristic in some degree down to the Austrian marriage, and which was essentially aggressive), and deduces that it is wrong to say that Jacobinism is dead or that Bonaparte is our best ally against it. But on September 29, 1809,² Windham speaks of Bonaparte as the suppressor of

¹ November 4, 1801: *Speeches*, Vol. II. p. 24.

² *Windham Papers*, Vol. II. p. 358.

democracy, and maintains that, owing to the French Revolution and the spread of democratical principles on the Continent, there is no alternative between no government and a government of absolute force. Later (May 16, 1810),¹ he puts the same idea into more concrete form: "If our reformers carry their madness and folly now or in any subsequent year . . . we shall fall from confusion to confusion, till we are either sunk into complete revolutionary anarchy, or are settled under Bonaparte. We shall probably enjoy the blessings of both—and after the taste of the former . . . many will think even a Government like Bonaparte's a blessing."

During the Empire, it is true, the Jacobins sank into obscurity, an obscurity for which they were despised by Englishmen. Their submission to the Empire was taken as a proof of insincerity; the English view of this attitude is summed up by Miss Williams in 1815² thus: They were reduced to death-like silence, but Napoleon employed some of their chiefs and practised their maxim of "Osez"; and "though they murmured at his injustice, they dreaded and worshipped his power."

Hitherto I have not mentioned Coleridge, whose *Essays on his Own Times*, consisting of contributions to the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*, are perhaps our best authorities both on this subject and on the general impression left on the Whigs of England by the *coup d'état* and the Consulate. In fact the changes of opinion of this brilliant but unstable observer are so strongly marked that it is really necessary to deal with him separately. When he is

¹ *Windham Papers*, Vol. II. p. 369. ² *Narrative*, pp. 38-9.

not blinded by prejudice against Napoleon, as he was in his later years, his contributions to these newspapers are worthy of perusal; at times we find an almost prophetic insight, and often, though not always, his judgment is sound. In his earlier writings, too, we do not observe any of that hysteria which disfigured his later contributions.

Coleridge, it must be remembered, was one of that knot of enthusiasts, Wordsworth among them, who hailed with delight the fall of the Bastille and the rise of liberty in France, and strongly disapproved of the war of 1793. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his first idea of Bonaparte after the *coup d'état* was that of a liberticide, and that accordingly his first few articles in the *Morning Post* (December 1799) were markedly hostile. As early as April 1799 he had feared that the spirit of aggrandizement in the French Government would prove fatal to French liberty, and now he seemed to find his fears realized. He regards the Constitution drawn up by Sieyès and Bonaparte as "this impudent offer of these mountebank liberticides," and goes on to add, "Alas, poor human nature! or rather, indeed, alas, poor Gallic nature! For *Γραίοι ἀει παῖδες*. The French are always children." ¹

The whole Constitution he regards as a farce. The senators are "creatures of a renegade priest, himself the creature of a foreign mercenary," ² or "the stones which Bonaparte, the Deucalion of this new inundation, found beneath his feet, and, flinging them behind him, metamorphosed into senators." The spirit is that of an oligarchy based on military

¹ December 31, 1799: Vol. II. p. 184. ² *Ibid.* p. 187.

force. "All which follows we regard as mere theatrical evolutions of a figure dance." Similarly, Canning sees that the new Constitution is incompatible with a "moderate American kind of government,"¹ with all popular representation, with anything, in short, but pure military despotism.²

Bonaparte, Coleridge considers as an insolent despot who has abused the confidence of the country which had won him his laurels. Throughout his proclamations "the fierce self-confidence and proud self-involution of a military despot, intoxicated with success, start out most obtrusively."³ Hence he infers⁴ that he is unlikely to make peace on the Continent, especially as to give up the scene of his late conquests would be to admit their inutility. In the same article he deals with a leading feature of Napoleonic diplomacy. By offering peace he throws the odium of continuing the war on the Allies, and gives his own Government an air of moderation. A week later (January 7, 1800) we notice a perceptible change in tone, due to the fact that Coleridge has read Bonaparte's letter to George III, which he considers "manly and unsullied by the least inflammatory insinuations against the Government or the country." Nevertheless, he still considers Bonaparte "a fugitive and an usurper," though he admits that if we continue the war, the French will regard him as a national hero who has "suspended the forms only to increase the energies of freedom,"⁵

¹ Which Pitt had thought it likely to inaugurate.

² Canning to Pitt, December 7, 1799 (*Pitt and Napoleon*, p. 320).

³ January 1, 1800, p. 192.

⁴ January 2, 1800, p. 195.

⁵ January 8, 1800, p. 221.

and goes on to express his dread of French power. "If veneration for Suwarrow could make warriors of the dark and hopeless serfs of the North,"¹ what will happen in France? Coleridge dreads the enormous increase of power due to centralization of power in the hands of a man "full of enterprise, genius and military experience," which he considers would take place if the war were continued. "If Bonaparte retain his popularity and the people their enthusiasm, it would follow that France will open the campaign with advantages she never before possessed."

Subsequently his view becomes more and more favourable. Even Brumaire he comes to consider "a necessary Revolution." The real causes of the usurpation must be sought for in the general state of public opinion and feeling; in the necessity of giving concentration and permanence to the executive government; and in the increasing conviction that it has become good policy "to exchange the forms of political freedom for the realities of civil security in order to make a real political freedom possible at some later period." Then follows a panegyric on the genius and exploits of Bonaparte, the strong man needed against the "boundless ambition" of Austria, the hope of literary and military men.² The Chief Consulate was essential to the union of France. Coleridge's sympathy is with Bonaparte rather than with the English Government. The English Ministers, he says,³ have made a "high though involuntary panegyric on

¹ January 8, 1800, p. 221.

² March 11, p. 313.

³ March 13, p. 387.

Bonaparte's genius and humanity" by considering him the greatest obstacle to reaction, by calling him a Jacobin, thus proclaiming his attachment to liberty, and by contrasting him with Suwarrow; and, again, he regards Bonaparte's power as firm, secured by property and by his military prowess. He comments on his wise measures of internal administration, those of "a despot indeed, but not a tyrant,"¹ his endeavours to heal the wounds of the Revolution by suppressing public vice, by relaxing the laws against the emigrants, and by rallying to his Government all men of ability. This in Coleridge's mind is his connection with the Revolution. He has buried its principles, but nevertheless excites the hopes of almost all Revolutionists. He concludes, "His is a government of experiment rather than of popularity. His object is to give tranquillity . . . rather than to rule by public delirium."² The great question arises as to whether he will show true greatness and act unselfishly for the good of the nation rather than of himself, and become a second Washington. Thus Coleridge appreciates the fact that Bonaparte was standing at the parting of the ways, an idea which Byron in later years expressed in the lines beginning :

"A single step into the right had made
This man the Washington of worlds betrayed."³

Coleridge's view at this period may be summed up in his own fine phrase : ⁴ "In this usurpation Bona-

¹ April 21, p. 405.

² April 21, p. 405.

³ See *Infra*, chap. v, section 2, p. 243.

⁴ March 11, p. 318.

parte stabbed his honesty in the vitals; it has perished—we admit it . . . but the mausoleum where it lies interred is among the wonders of the world.”

Two years later Coleridge again takes up the journalistic pen. On September 21, 1802, he begins a series of articles called “A Comparison of France now with Rome under Julius and Augustus,” and we at once notice a great change in his opinions, traceable to four main causes: the Consulate for Life, the pillaging of Italy “in order to convert Paris into a new Rome,” the capital of Europe, the growth of a “masked and military despotism,”¹ and the change in the bearing of Bonaparte himself, who, says Coleridge,² first imitated the decorous ambition of Augustus by becoming first magistrate for ten years, and then the “contemptuous impetuosity” of Julius—by being nominated for life with two consuls under him. (Had Coleridge written two years later he might have added Tiberius.) By the Consulate for life Napoleon clearly showed his personal ambition, his predilection for monarchy, and at the same time his resolve to shut the Bourbons out for ever.

Coleridge now considers that he owes his position merely to the weariness of France,³ who is, as it were, in the position of a man on the morning after a debauch. When she has recovered from her temporary weakness, Bonaparte’s position will be impaired, resting as it does on militarism and espionage: there are many reasons for a speedy overthrow of his “unjustifiable” power. In the first place, a

¹ September 21, 1802, p. 480.

² *Ibid.*

³ September 25, p. 500.

free press is "the only infernal machine truly formidable to a modern despot."¹ In the second place, there is no order, like the Senate of Rome, to stand between Bonaparte and the people, so that by attacking it he might still pose as "the child and champion of Jacobinism." As it is, no party supports him. His power, resting chiefly on fear, is "an isthmus of Darien beat upon by the two oceans of Royalism and Republicanism;"² nor can he hope to survive by balancing the one party against the other, as it is absurd to transfer the notion of balance from mechanics to politics. Besides, he is alienating his old friends without winning over a single enemy, by his excessive favouritism towards the Royalists.³ (Lord Holland also remarks on this as a mistake on the part of Napoleon; he is probably right, though Napoleon's object, no doubt, was to impart respectability to his own Government and confidence to other Powers.) Further, Coleridge maintains,⁴ in a long and serious war the despotism must either depress military merit or fall a sacrifice to military rivalry. Valour and warlike genius are qualities safe only in an emperor.

Finally, he decides⁵ that the obstacles to a Bourbon restoration, which he seems rather to contemplate with pleasure, are diminished. Formerly property changes were the great obstacle. Now, however, the First Consul has tried to prevent the subdivision

¹ September 25, p. 500.

² October 2, p. 510.

³ But he later contradicts himself by saying that the Government, aware of the strength of the Royalists, becomes "fierce, suspicious and prone to violent measures."

⁴ October 2, p. 513.

⁵ October 9, p. 540.

of landed property, "for he has learned that small independent properties are a nursery of freemen." Again, the Concordat has smoothed the way for a triumphal return of the Bourbons, though, on the other hand, he has to admit the total opposition of Bonaparte to all feudal institutions.¹

Coleridge was a man in whom the wish was father to the thought; and it is therefore probable that he exaggerated Bonaparte's weakness because he wanted him to fall. Though we do not as yet notice the hysterical bitterness of tone, so conspicuous in him later on, it is easy enough to perceive that he is disappointed in Bonaparte. It was too much, he admits,² "to anticipate any system favourable to national liberty from a young man who had formed his habits, feelings and political creed at the head of an army and amid the career of dazzling victories." English freedom is anti-pathetic to him; he is a "liberal encourager³ of all great public works and of every species of public merit, *not connected with the assertion of political freedom.*" This last phrase is the keynote to all Coleridge's ideas on Napoleon. At first he took a fairly favourable view, waiting to see if Napoleon would be a friend to liberty (as Coleridge understood it). As it became more and more clear that he would not, Coleridge drifted into greater and greater hostility, and finally into downright hatred.

¹ J. G. Lemaistre, in his *Rough Sketch of Modern Paris*, speaks (p. 146) of the French Royalist sentiment shown at the play *Edouard en Ecosse*, a drama dealing with the Young Chevalier.

² October 5, p. 516.

³ September 21, p. 486.

SECTION IV

IMPRESSIONS OF PARIS IN 1802

IN 1801 negotiations were opened, and in March 1802 the Treaty of Amiens was signed. In consequence a host of Englishmen poured into France, eager to observe the changes produced by the great events of the last thirteen years. How far did their impressions tend to confirm the views of Bonaparte and his Government, previously entertained in England?

This flocking to Paris did not pass without censure. Wordsworth inveighed against it in the Sonnet¹ beginning :

“Is it a reed that’s shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?”

and men of such different views as Romilly and Lord Whitworth united in condemning it. The latter early in 1803 speaks² of the mischief done by “some people here who disgrace the name and character of Englishmen” in encouraging Bonaparte to believe that the vigorous measures of the English Government are merely intended as a menace, while Romilly,³ more sweepingly, is “disgusted at the eagerness with which the English crowd to do

¹ Sonnet II. ² *Despatches*, March 24, 1803, p. 135.

³ *Memoirs*, 1802, Vol. II. p. 91.

homage at the new court of a usurper and a tyrant." Nevertheless, among these Englishmen were many men of note; Fox was one of them. His impression of Bonaparte, however, was not favourable; "a young man considerably intoxicated with success" is his verdict. He seems to have preferred Berthier,¹ and this though Bonaparte laid himself out to be pleasant to Fox as he did to all his English visitors. Hence most of them appear to have carried away as favourable an idea of him as did Miss Berry,² who liked his manner, "very simple and unaffected," and his countenance, in which there was "more of complacency and quiet intelligence than of any decided penetration and strong expression whatever."³ In these days, when all our innumerable illustrated papers reproduce photographs of every man of fame or notoriety from a monarch to a murderer, it is hard to understand the anxiety of people a century ago to see for themselves what manner of man Napoleon was, and to appreciate

¹ Berthier, as a man about whom little was known—he always held the self-effacing post of Chief of Staff in Napoleon's campaigns—seems unaccountably to have inspired Englishmen with the idea that he was a great man, some pamphleteers actually ascribing Napoleon's success in war to him. On July 1813 *The Times* said that Berthier, now reported dead, was useful to Bonaparte as restraining his passions and giving order to his wild and extravagant conceptions.

² *Journals and Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 189. She lays great stress on the extraordinary "sweetness" of his expression.

³ But contrast Lemaistre (*Rough Sketch of Modern Paris*, p. 82), who declares that "his whole person, like the mind which it contains, is singular and remarkable." He goes on to compare Bonaparte's appearance with that of Kemble the actor.

their descriptions of his appearance. It is interesting to observe that not a single man who saw him describes him as in the least degree repulsive; and his dignity is commented on by at least one observer, J. G. Lemaistre, who characterizes an interview with Bonaparte as "one of the most splendid things of the kind in Europe," and proceeds thus: "As to the First Consul, he is as superior in little things as in great ones, and had he been a sovereign, he could not possibly discharge this part of his duty with more ease, dignity and decorum. He is also very ready at finding subjects of conversation and opportunities of civility."¹

But to most reflective Englishmen who visited Paris in 1802 the most interesting question was not Bonaparte's appearance, but his Government; for the French Government was exciting to their imagination not only because it was romantic in its origin, but because it was an experiment, unknown in modern history, a despotism on a democratic basis.

But while observers readily enough perceived the despotism, the qualifying feature of it seems to have largely escaped their notice. It was left for Hobhouse to point out this characteristic of the Napoleonic Empire in 1815, a year when, it must be admitted, it had become considerably more obvious.

The spectacle of a despotism in the land which had aroused the highest hopes of freedom was especially displeasing to the Whigs, and in contemplating its absolutism they lost sight of its redeeming features, its vigour, its justice, its equality. Tom

¹ *Rough Sketch of Modern Paris*, p. 161.

Paine¹ in 1802 bursts out into a strong tirade in which we find such expressions as, "This is not a country for an honest man to live in"; "Republic! do you call this a republic? Why, they are worse off than the slaves of Constantinople!" . . . "I have done with Europe and its slavish politics;" while Romilly, an observer of much more balance, indignantly comments on the lack of real *égalité* in Paris, "though it is placarded up everywhere," and declares that "a more absolute despotism than that which now exists here, France never experienced. Louis XIV was never so independent of public opinion as Bonaparte is," with his well-organized police and his suppression of free discussion. R. L. Edgeworth² refused to go to the First Consul's Court; he "could no longer consider Bonaparte as a great man abiding by his principles and content with the true glory of being the first citizen of a free people; but as one meditating usurpation, and on the point of overturning for the selfish love of dominion the liberty of France." And Creevey³ describes an English visitor as returning from France "quite scared out of his wits at the dreadful power and villainy of the French Government."

But the idea of Bonaparte, the despot, as "absolute as Kauli-Khan," is not confined to the Whigs: we find it also in the memoirs of Tories. A fairly favourable observer, Lord Cornwallis,⁴ says that the

¹ Quoted in *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives*, p. 140.

² *Memoirs*.

³ Creevey, I. 5.

⁴ *Correspondence*, December 7, 1801: Vol. III. p. 406. Cornwallis was favourably impressed by Bonaparte, though not so favourably as the latter was by Cornwallis, whom he regarded as the ideal Englishman.

military despotism, though "in most respects wisely, is not mildly administered." Colonel Littlehales¹ describes how the Corps Legislatif is surrounded by soldiers; how the law-courts have sentries before them; and adds, "You will collect from this how little real liberty exists in this country."

Another prominent feature of French life which English observers did not fail to notice and to attribute to Bonaparte was the general atmosphere of suspicion. Littlehales in his letters to Addington comments² more than once on the lack of "reciprocal social confidence" among the people. Hence they have recourse to the theatre. And after dining with several of the leading generals, he sees no reason to change this opinion. In fact, he would seem to partake of the view, fairly widespread, as we have seen, in England before the Peace, that Bonaparte is likely to be overthrown by rival generals. Mr. Cyril Jackson, Dean of Christ Church, in a letter to Malmesbury,³ gives a similar impression of Parisian society, "void of amusement, because void of security," and attributes this directly to Bonaparte, whose "great end is to diffuse suspicion everywhere, considering it his best hold." Other observers, however, consider that Bonaparte is himself suspicious. Thus Paget, who passed through Paris in 1801 on his way to Vienna, said⁴ that the First Consul lived in fear of his life, and that

¹ *Addington Memoirs*, November 25, 1801: Vol. II. p. 12.

² *Ibid.* November 1801: Vol. II. p. 6.

³ Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, April 27, 1802: Vol. IV. p. 71.

⁴ *Paget Papers*, September 14, 1801: Vol. II. p. 12.

Fouché heightened these fears, and strengthened his influence, by discovering pretended plots. With views like these as a starting-point it was easy to go a little further, and see in Bonaparte the suspicious tyrant, a view unquestionably taken by that unconciliatory negotiator, Lord Whitworth. Whitworth detested Bonaparte, and on January 17, 1803, gave a most malignant description of him as living retired in the country with no domestic comfort, "occupied with trivial details of internal arrangement and such as suit the natural turn of his mind, prone to all the extremes of suspicion." He reads the letters of individuals and makes them a pretext for tormenting those who are nearest him, as well as those who think themselves at a safe distance. Hence "he is a scourge to himself and the nation which, for its punishment, he has subdued to his will." In these words we can trace the contempt of the stiff, haughty aristocrat for the energetic, meddlesome and vivacious Southerner; to Whitworth's mind the "nearer he is viewed, the less formidable he seems."¹ But this characteristic of wishing to have everything through his own hands—in reality due to his passion for details—is brought out by Romilly, who, alluding to Bonaparte's supposed bad opinion of mankind, says that in consequence he distrusts everybody and does everything himself.

Observers were probably on surer ground when they commented on Bonaparte's unpopularity.

¹ *Despatches*, p. 46. The extracts from Whitworth's despatches are taken from Mr. O. Browning's *England and Napoleon in 1803*.

It is doubtful if Napoleon was ever universally popular in France, except perhaps in the overwhelming years of conquest 1805-6-7. In 1802 his popularity was largely of a negative sort. Cornwallis notes this in a letter from Amiens.¹ "People of all ranks seem to look on quiet as the *summum bonum*—ce grand homme nous a tranquilisé." Less favourable observers comment on his absolute unpopularity. Thus Romilly, discussing the scorn in which Bonaparte holds the opinions of the people, evinced by his not allowing the "unhallowed feet" of the Parisian mob to enter the Louvre, says that if he supplies them with festivals, it is less to gain popularity than to occupy and amuse them, that his popularity with the army is confined to those troops whom he has himself commanded; his character "inspires fear much more than it conciliates affection"; though his talents are admired, the public are not attached to him: they do not enjoy his greatness, which is purely self-centred. He adds, significantly enough, that Moreau is beloved. Nevertheless, Romilly's view of the basis of Bonaparte's power is substantially the same as that of Cornwallis. He attributes it to the horrors of the Revolution, which the people now loathe—they like "the quiet despotism which leaves everybody in the full and secure enjoyment of their prosperity."²

¹ Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, December 7, 1801: Vol. III. p. 406. In the *Fortescue Papers* there is a letter dated August 12, 1800, which confirms this impression. Mr. J. Edwards writes: "All classes speak with enthusiasm of Bonaparte for having given them six months past such security and calm as they have never before had since the change of Government."

² *Memoirs*, October 1802; Vol. II. p. 100.

A fortiori, the Tories accentuate the impression of unpopularity. One of Malmesbury's correspondents, Lord Pembroke,¹ "could not have believed any person to be so universally disliked," yet he thinks that this hatred leads to nothing and the Consul's power remains as absolute as ever. On the other hand, Lord Whitworth² imagines that this unpopularity of Bonaparte—"his conduct is reprobated by nine out of ten Frenchmen"—coupled with the weakness of Revolutionary finance, will prove the best auxiliary for England; and this truly conciliatory negotiator goes on to add that every year of peace will weaken his Government and help his enemies. "By peace we can wage a more dangerous and, I trust, more decisive warfare against his Government." This remark shows the depth of English prejudice against which Napoleon had to contend, and justifies Lord Holland's remark that the Treaty of Amiens was an experiment which convinced Bonaparte of the hostility of England.³

A few other points of interest were noted by English observers, *e. g.* the alteration of manners in Paris, a change for the worse in the opinion of most—*e. g.* Miss Berry and J. G. Lemaistre; the dependence of the Government on Bonaparte's "probity, moderation, firmness and perseverance." Romilly, too, hints not obscurely at the monarchical sympathies of Bonaparte, noticed also by other visitors, *e. g.* Cornwallis, when he contrasts the splendour of

¹ Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, February 4, 1803: Vol. IV. p. 189.

² *Despatches*, December 1, 1802, p. 18.

³ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 232.

the palaces of the Bonapartes with the neglect of Versailles.

Thus we find that the visits to Paris for the most part confirmed—though the confirmation was not necessarily logical—the previous impressions of France and Bonaparte. English observers grasped the obvious facts readily enough, but even those who were shrewdest omitted to perceive the deep forces and causes which lay behind them. Further, many of them brought back the material, gleaned from Napoleon's enemies, which was to form the framework of the scandalous histories and pamphlets of 1803-5.

SECTION V

AMIENS AND THE CHANGE OF FEELING IN ENGLAND

“ M. DE CALONNE states that in England the enthusiasm for Bonaparte is not only general, but carried to an extent which it is difficult to believe. The Court and the city, the capital and the provinces, all classes of citizens, from ministers to artisans, are agreed to publish his praises, and vie in chanting his victories and the lustre of his rule.” This, although an admission of a Royalist agent,¹ is probably exaggerated, and yet, when the London mob drew Lauriston’s carriage in triumph through the streets under the belief that they were honouring a brother of the First Consul, Napoleon reached the high-water mark of his popularity in England. Even the caricaturists unbent, and a characteristically refined effort depicts the Consul bestowing a salutation on a frowsy matron, supposed to represent Britannia. Just for the moment the English nation forgot its usual calm and burst into enthusiasm. The Whig remark of a year earlier, that the English people welcomed Bonaparte’s victories as bringing them nearer peace, seemed almost justified; and there is no doubt that the great bulk of the English people really welcomed the opportunity for recon-

¹ Quoted by Mr. Alger in *Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives*, p. 134.

ciliation with France. The horrors of the Revolution had been largely forgotten; or if they were not, all the greater credit was given to the man who had finally put an end to them; nor had Bonaparte yet "sinned the sins that cannot be forgiven." He had not yet dared to ape ancient dynasties by a title of Emperor; he had not yet executed d'Enghien; he had not yet shown himself to be "no gentleman."

But from the very moment that the treaty was signed, a reaction against the First Consul began to set in. In the first place, there was a considerable body of Tory and Burkeite irreconcilables. This party had hitherto been on the defensive, upholding the war—now they were able to assume the offensive, attacking the peace; and secondly, the French aggressions on Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Holland gave point to their diatribes, and turned many of the Whigs against Bonaparte. Even Fox, who in 1801 rejoiced in "the triumph of the French Government over the English,"¹ changes his note during the peace. His chief reason for indignation is Bonaparte's internal despotism²—a year earlier he had merely said that if there is to be no political liberty in the world, "Bonaparte is the fittest person to be master"³—yet in his speech on the king's message relative to the war,⁴ he arraigns Bonaparte's aggression on Switzerland as scandalous; his conduct in Holland (making it a depot for French troops) as "no less despicable for its meanness than

¹ *Correspondence*, October 22, 1801: Vol. III. p. 349.

² *Ibid.* December 12, 1802: Vol. III. p. 388.

³ *Ibid.* October 1801: Vol. III. p. 345.

⁴ *Speeches*, May 24, 1803: Vol. VI. p. 494.

hateful for its atrocity ”; the San Domingo expedition as “ one of the most absurd and foolish ever undertaken for the interests of France herself ”; the treatment of Toussaint as a “ material blot ” on his character.

Nor, naturally, was Fox pleased with the First Consul's attempts to curb the English press. In fact, we may safely say that by 1803 Fox's ideal was shattered; and though he was still anxious for peace with Bonaparte, though he refrained for the most part from any abuse of him,¹ one can feel that he would never again be glad to see a triumph of the French Government, now no longer the champion of freedom, over the English, hateful as the latter still was to him. Sheridan is more decided: his eyes are fully opened when he declares²: “ My alarms begin when those of some persons cease.” He had fully grasped the fact that Bonaparte, wielding the same force as the Revolution, but a force better tempered, better directed, and above all, made attractive, was a far more dangerous foe than the Revolution running riot and committing repulsive horrors. Six months later³ he says that to look at Europe is to see nothing but France. It is possible to measure her dimensions, but it is impossible to measure the ambition of Bonaparte; and a further danger lies in the fact that Bonaparte's situation makes it imperatively necessary for him to “ go on in the barter with his subjects, and to

¹ Yet in 1806 he spoke with indignation of the “ shuffling, insincere policy of France.”

² *Speeches*, May 14, 1802: Vol. V. p. 197.

³ *Ibid.* December 8, 1802: Vol. V. p. 214.

promise to make them the masters of the world if they will consent to be his slaves." How far changed is this from the Sheridan who called¹ Bonaparte "a friend to peace!" Above all, Sheridan has come to the conclusion during the peace that Bonaparte is irreconcilably hostile to England, that his object is not to rival—for "his commercial knowledge cannot be great"—but to destroy, our commerce, that in his continental aggressions the idea at the back of his mind is the overthrow of England. "Though in the tablet of his mind there may be some marginal note about cashiering the King of Etruria, yet the whole text is occupied with the destruction of this country." In an earlier speech (May 19, 1802) he ridiculed the idea that French commerce and colonization should be encouraged, "to make Bonaparte afraid of war and anxious for peace."

Everywhere we can trace the same hostility growing up, and everywhere it is due to the same causes. "There is no describing to you," writes Romilly,² "the effect which Bonaparte's proclamation against the Swiss has produced in this country. Earlier,³ we have the testimony of Malmesbury that the popularity of the peace is decreasing owing to the encroachment of France, her insolent demands as to the press and the *émigrés*, and "the oppressive and infamous derision of Germany under the mock title of a plan of indemnities." In fact, the attitude

¹ *Speeches*, February 17, 1800 : Vol. V. p. 138.

² On November 2, 1802 : *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 103.

³ *Diaries and Correspondence*, "From May to October," Vol. IV. p. 74.

of Pitt, as described by Malmesbury,¹ becomes more and more representative of English public opinion. At the time of the peace Pitt thought that Bonaparte had satisfied his ambition, and that a tranquil France would be most to his interest, but his measures in Italy, Elba,² Louisiana and the two Floridas³ undeceived him. His great object now is to "watch and contract the overweening ambition of Bonaparte." The High Tory note is sounded by Lord Folkestone,⁴ who declared that the Peace of Amiens was disgraceful, "a treaty built on Jacobin principles and confirming Jacobin power." His remarks are an excellent example of the irreconcilable attitude.

Nevertheless, it was the idea which we have already noticed in Sheridan, that Bonaparte was

¹ *Diaries and Correspondence*, April 8, 1802: Vol. IV. p. 64.

² England was as sensitive about the Mediterranean in 1802 as in 1912. Windham (*Speeches*, November 4, 1801) said that Bonaparte's policy is to make the Mediterranean what it was once idly called, the Sea of France. Canning (*Speeches*, May 24, 1803) speaks to the same effect: "Stupendous revolutions in political and military affairs" are to take place in the Mediterranean. Whitworth (*Despatches*, December 27, 1802) looked with suspicion on his project to unite the Ligurian and Italian republics, thus acquiring another port in the Mediterranean, "and, what is the great object of his policy, the means of limiting the intercourse between his Majesty's dominions and the Continent."

³ English statesmen always viewed Napoleon's colonial designs with great mistrust. Windham (*Speeches*, November 4, 1801) describes France's power in the New World as "the grand comprehensive circle to which the New Roman Empire may soon be expected to spread, now that peace has removed all obstacles and opened to her a safe and easy passage into the three remaining quarters of the globe."

⁴ *Liverpool Memoirs*, May 13, 1802, p. 182.

essentially hostile to England, that really roused the English people against him. Though we have it on the authority of Lord Holland¹ that he made a point of cultivating the friendship of the peace party in England, and though he never expressed irreconcilable dislike to England until the Whitworth negotiations, yet Whig and Tory alike shared in the impression that all his measures were aimed against England. One quotation, this time from a Tory, will suffice to illustrate this point. Lord Pembroke at Paris wrote to Malmesbury,² "England is manifestly the great object of his hatred and jealousy; and all his plans, all his thoughts go to attain the means of lowering, if not also of subduing it." Nor was English confidence in Bonaparte increased by the growing conviction that his policy was utterly hypocritical; this idea was confirmed by Lord Whitworth, who commented on Bonaparte's proposal to crush the Dey of Algiers in the following words³: "We may soon expect to hear this project announced to the several Courts of Europe dressed up in all the tinsel of French philanthropy and French public spirit."

Early in 1803 the Peltier trial was arousing much interest in England. Popular opinion was deeply stirred by the attempt of Bonaparte to curb the English press, though even Lord Whitworth kept insisting through February and March 1803, that,

¹ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 195.

² *Diaries and Correspondence*, February 4, 1803: Vol. IV. p. 189.

³ *Despatches*, January 31, 1803, p. 57. The same idea is to be found in "Lines to be sung at the funeral of Napoleon" (1806), with a more general application.

if Bonaparte had recourse to war, his action must be attributed to the irritation kept alive by the press.¹ Mackintosh gave voice to the popular feeling in words of no slight eloquence. He displays the same shade of Whig opinion as Coleridge and Burdon, for he had written strongly on behalf of the Revolution—in fact his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* was a red rag to the Tory bull as late as 1814. He puts the case on a high footing, as a struggle between the greatest power in Europe, “The most indefatigable, searching, multiform tyranny that ever existed,” and the last free press in it;² declares the opposition of England to vast projects of aggrandizement, and the need for a free press “to point the popular indignation against those who must soon be enemies.” He inveighs against a France trained to slavery and the contemptible spectacle of Jacobins “cringing and fawning to Despotism,”³ and concludes with the open defiance—“If any modern tyrant were, in the drunkenness of his insolence, to hope to overawe an English jury, I trust and believe they would tell him ‘Our ancestors braved the bayonets (*sic*) of Cromwell—we bid defiance to yours.’ ‘Contempsit Catilinæ gladios, non pertimescam tuos.’”⁴

Finally, the seizure of the British visitors in France sealed the fate of Napoleon’s popularity. Romilly⁵ wrote to Dumont, that if it had been Bonaparte’s object to give strength to the British Ministry and make the war universally popular in

¹ Whitworth had no sympathy with Peltier.

² *Peltier’s Trial*, p. 89.

³ *Ibid.* p. 117.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 179.

⁵ *Memoirs*, May 31, 1803: Vol. II. p. 106.

England, he could not have devised a better expedient. Major Vivian, who saw Napoleon at Elba, thought that he "ordered the detention of the English under the influence of a temporary irritation, and he was afterwards unwilling to revoke the mandate he had issued."¹

The experiment of peace had been tried and had failed, and henceforth the hostility of England is turned more and more from the French nation to its ruler, and therefore adopts a more personal and a more bitter tone. The French nation is henceforth regarded merely as an accomplice, though a guilty one, in the crimes of Bonaparte; we shall see the full force of this idea in 1814.

On the rupture of negotiations, the chief impression in England was that the First Consul was the sole cause of war, the troubler of Europe. Nelson, who by no means reciprocated Bonaparte's admiration, hopes that "the villain Bonaparte will be upset and that a permanent peace will ensue." "It is really shocking that one animal should disturb the peace of Europe," and in May 1803 he writes to Sidmouth,² that "the correspondence is certainly much in our favour. It so strongly marks the hatred of Bonaparte to this country." Explanations of Napoleon's conduct took two lines. Lord Holland³ considered that he was glad of war in 1803 partly because of the flourishing state of his army, and partly because he thought that then, and then only, was France a match for the Counter-Revolution;

¹ *Pitt and Napoleon*, p. 176.

² Addington, *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 180.

³ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 235.

while Canning¹ excused him at the expense of the English Ministers: "Flesh and blood—at least a tyrant's flesh and blood—could scarcely resist the temptation of trampling upon unresisting imbecility." In somewhat of the same spirit Sheridan, on August 10, 1803, compared Bonaparte to Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Bonaparte, he argued, was misled by the words of Windham and others into believing that England would never resist him. So, greatly taken aback when England did resist him, he might feel inclined to say: "If I thought he'd been so valiant, I'd be damned ere I had challenged him."

From the idea that Bonaparte rushed into war, it was easy to infer that he had some great scheme of aggrandizement on hand; hence there was great alarm. Fox² "foresees dreadful things if Bonaparte takes, as is natural with him, violent measures." At this epoch the fear of Napoleon was not yet tinged with the depreciation of later years. Canning, one of the greatest, but at the same time one of the most open-minded of his enemies, remarked at the end of 1802:³ "I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, to the amazing ascendant of his genius. Tell me not of his measures and his policy. It is his genius, his character, that keeps the world in awe." To meet this, he continued, we want similar arms. "I vote for large military establishments, but for the purpose of coping with Bonaparte, one great commanding spirit is worth them all." It must be remembered

¹ *Speeches*, June 3, 1803: Vol. II. p. 106.

² *Correspondence*, June 6, 1803: Vol. III. p. 221.

³ *Speeches*, December 1802: on the Army Estimates: Vol. II. p. 61.

that Canning was largely instrumental in discovering Wellington.

One of the main consequences of the actual rupture was that it let loose those pamphleteers and satirists who had hitherto been restrained by the desire not to irritate Bonaparte, or by the example held out to them by Peltier's condemnation. Hence, after this we have numerous surveys of Bonaparte's policy, and numerous references to his unscrupulous diplomacy. Nor was this theme confined to pamphleteers. Now it is Malmesbury¹ suspecting him of duping Austria and Russia in turn. Now Harrowby² describes the Spaniards as his tools. Now Mr. Jackson³ fears he will take Hamburg, "for as long as he is not opposed he will certainly continue to be progressive." Now Mr. Hunter⁴ calls him "a second Attila, fastening upon Europe as his prey." Even historians like H. Scott, who wrote ten years afterwards, change their tone when they deal with events subsequent to 1803. He who discredits El Arish, gravely narrates that in 1805 Villeneuve was strangled by Bonaparte's Mamelukes.

Bonaparte was now fully established as a proper object of detestation; and for the next dozen years this feeling was maintained not only by inflammatory writings, and by the tenacity with which Englishmen cling to their opinions, but, what was more important, by the pressure, economic and military, of the Great War.

¹ *Diaries and Correspondence*, February 23, 1803: Vol. IV. p. 174.

² *Ibid.* May 20, 1804: Vol. IV. p. 312.

³ *Paget Papers*, June 13, 1803: Vol. II. p. 90.

⁴ *Vindication of the Cause of Great Britain* (1803).

CHAPTER II
BONAPARTE'S POWER AT ITS
HEIGHT, 1803-1812

SECTION I

THE RENEWAL OF WAR AND NAPOLEON'S CORONATION

THE second and more important stage of the war had begun, and we now find England absolutely face to face with Bonaparte. For this war, unlike the previous one, was due to a quarrel between England and Bonaparte himself. Each side girded itself for a decisive struggle. England seized the West Indian islands and called out volunteers and militia in hundreds of thousands; Bonaparte prepared the Boulogne Flotilla and trained the Grande Armée. The question of the invasion of England lies outside this subject. It would be irrelevant to discuss whether Napoleon really intended to invade the country, and hardly less so to investigate the attitude of mind of England with regard to the projected invasion.¹

Though it is perhaps something of an exaggeration to describe this period as that of the "great terror," nevertheless considerable apprehensions *were* entertained in England. We can see alarm reflected in the increased acerbity of the attacks on Bonaparte—the hatred of the English pamphleteers and

¹ See Appendix, B.

caricaturists was quickened by fear, and the years 1803-5, the years of the camp at Boulogne, mark the greatest output of their scurrilous productions. Surely this is more than a mere coincidence.

During this period the *Anti-gallican* ran its brief and not very brilliant course. It is a disappointing periodical—one is startled when one comes across Campbell's "Soldier's Dream" embedded in a mass of worthless verse. In these patriotic songs it is astounding to find what an enormous amount of work two or three ordinary ideas can do, and it would be profitable for a statistician to count up the number of times Agincourt or Blenheim occur in these verses. The other contents of this paper are mainly addresses to regiments and loyal speeches at public dinners—where the number of toasts drunk fills the modern mind with respectful wonder—and, above all, repetition after repetition of Bonaparte's atrocities. Very similar is the character of the pamphlets and broadsides, which hold Bonaparte up not only to execration, but to ridicule. The very titles of these pamphlets are a sufficiently clear index to their contents, *e. g.* "Plunder and Partition as practised on the Continent by Bonaparte," "A Full, True and Particular Account of the Crimes of Bonaparte," "Atrocities of the Corsican Demon," "Bonaparte's Promises and Performances." In all these productions and in some of the "Histories" of Bonaparte, notably that of Lieutenant Scarratt, nothing is left untold which might stimulate the people against Napoleon. The Jaffa poisoning case and the El Arish tragedy are run for all they are worth, and grave charges of

a purely hypothetical nature are brought up, *e. g.* one of aiding and abetting murder—"Savary by Bonaparte's orders stabbed Desaix in the back at Marengo"—and another which might perhaps be termed obtaining credit on false pretences—"To Berthier all Bonaparte's principal victories are to be ascribed." More often, however, the charges are vague. He is "the great architect of crimes." "His principles are truly Machiavellian : he is the first statesman who has attempted to follow in practice the infamous theory of that diabolical writer." ¹ "Mazes of Dissimulation and Rivers of Blood" are attributed to him.

Very similar is the spirit which appears in the caricatures. It is difficult for us to see any humour in these singularly coarse cartoons; but we must remember that the age in which they were produced was in many respects a brutal age, and what would not appeal to us now, appealed to the populace of those days. Nevertheless, the figures drawn by Gillray, Cruikshank and others have very faint resemblance to human forms, and many of these pictures are merely horrible. Their importance has been greatly exaggerated, and their truth can be seen from the fact that they always represent Bonaparte as the "skinny Frenchman," whereas in reality the Consul was steadily acquiring that sleekness which was characteristic of his appearance in later years.

It is probable that fear of invasions was stronger among the lower and middle classes, the classes that would be most liable to the influence of Scarratt,

¹ W. Hunter, *Vindication of the Cause of Great Britain*.

Gillray and the rest, than among the rulers of the State, whose attitude towards Napoleon does not appear to have been much altered by the Flotilla, whereas the antipathy of the bulk of the people was increased through fear. Hence "Boney" emerged as a bugbear for recalcitrant babies, one of his chief functions in English literature.

The unfavourable views of Bonaparte, enhanced by the rupture of Amiens and intensified by the Boulogne Flotilla, received confirmation by the execution of the Duke d'Enghien, a blunder which finally turned Napoleon's enemies into irreconcilables, and a crime which shocked all Europe. Courts received the French ambassador in mourning, the press thundered out invectives, even Napoleon's admirers had no word to say in his defence. In later years Napoleon justified himself on the grounds of expediency and self-preservation, but his pleas are weak. Even before the news came that the Duke was executed, Fox¹ called his capture a "sad business. If only Bonaparte would pardon him handsomely, but I fear . . . ;" and Holland,² the champion of Napoleon, attacked the "unprovoked sacrifice" of an innocent man, which "will and ought to remain a blot upon his memory." The Tories went in for unmeasured abuse. "Too atrocious to require comment," "the horrors committed by the most savage devil that ever disgraced human nature," are the views of the Paget family.³

¹ *Correspondence*, April 6, 1804 : Vol. III. 461.

² *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 228.

³ *Paget Papers*, March 23 and April 20 : Vol. II. pp. 99 and 128.

Malmesbury¹ traces the execution of d'Enghien to the assassination schemes, and is, of course, right in so doing, though he is not correct in the motive which he assigns, viz. that the assassination scheme gave great alarm to Bonaparte, and excited in him temporary fits of passion like those of Paul. Hawkesbury,² on the other hand, considers the assassination scheme as trumped up to divert the attention of Europe from "the sanguinary deed perpetrated by the direct order of the First Consul in violation of the rights of nations and of the most simple laws of humanity and honour." It was unfortunate for Bonaparte that, also as a consequence of the conspiracy, Pichegru and Captain Wright committed suicide. Their deaths were, of course, attributed by the British public to Bonaparte, and even as far on as 1814 and 1815 a certain section of the press clamoured for "justice on the murderer of Captain Wright."³ The deaths of these three men, for only one of which Bonaparte was responsible, made people believe him to be a monster who revelled in blood and destroyed for the mere delight in destroying, an utterly erroneous notion, but one which afterwards seemed justified by the awful sacrifice of life in the campaigns of 1809, 1812 and 1813.

People were far too much occupied with Captain

¹ *Diaries and Correspondence*, March 9, 1804 : Vol. IV. p. 293.

² *Liverpool Memoirs*, p. 231.

³ Windham (*Speeches*, July 9, 1805 : Vol. II. p. 312) attributes incredible baseness to Bonaparte when he says that his hostility to Captain Wright was due to the latter's friendship with Sidney Smith.

Wright, and the Boulogne Flotilla, and the memories of Jaffa and El Arish to pay much attention to the Code Napoleon. It is rarely, if ever, mentioned at this epoch, and if, later on, some of the more intelligent observers speak of it, it is only to adduce therefrom that Bonaparte was a considerable administrator as well as a great soldier. Thus we find H. Scott admitting that Bonaparte's talents are great for the civil administration of the country, and instancing the Civil Code and the National Almanac, though he qualifies his praise by adding, "But the passions peculiar to Bonaparte were too strong for the effects of his wisdom." Bentham admits the benefits conferred on France by the Civil Code, but adds: "With what degree of skill it is made up, I have never yet seen any use in the inquiring." ¹

Of course, the great event of these years was Bonaparte's coronation. It is hard to say what passion was most kindled in Englishmen at the spectacle. Contempt of the parvenu Corsican, coupled with jealousy at seeing him among the crowned heads, with disgust at the "*singerie* of Charlemagne," ² with indignation at the part played by the Pope. The Whigs saw their hopes ruined when:

" . . . a Pope,
Is summoned in to crown an Emperor," ³

and grieved as at the open grave of liberty. ⁴ The

¹ Bentham, *Works* (Edinburgh, 1838): Part IV. p. 527.

² Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, May 31, 1804: Vol. IV. p. 325.

³ Wordsworth, *Excursion*, Book III.

⁴ Ten years later (November 1814) the *Edinburgh* speaks of Carnot's opposition to the Empire. "It is pleasing to

Tories loathed the newness of the new dynasty and dreaded the idea of having to recognize it; which, to do them justice, they never did.

Nevertheless, the one feeling which the coronation conspicuously did *not* excite was surprise. In 1802 Lord Whitworth had written¹ that the First Consul was thinking of a divorce from Josephine and an assumption of the title of "Emperor of the Gauls"; he went on to add that it would destroy the last shreds of his popularity, but that his presumption blinds him to reason. We have even earlier indications of the same idea. In March 1801 Lord Minto² wrote to Paget that Bonaparte proposes to crown the Duke of Parma *in Paris* as King of Tuscany, "and thus to feel the pulse of Paris and France at the sight of a coronation." Democracy is out of fashion, and the Republicans "are nearly ripe for the transition to a monarchy in the person, no doubt, of the Protector." In December 1801 Cornwallis³ describes him as "quick, animated, et il parle en roi," and Fox, on January 1, 1803,⁴ hopes that the rumour that he is to be Emperor of the Gauls is false. "I am not one of those who think names signify nothing." This idea receives confirmation from later writers. H. Scott comments on the slow, systematic advances towards

dwell on these words (*i. e.* Carnot's speech); they were indeed the last accents of expiring freedom in that great country which has sacrificed so lavishly for its independence."

¹ *Despatches*, December 23, 1802, p. 31.

² *Paget Papers*, March 23, 1801 : Vol. I. p. 330.

³ Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, December 7, 1801 : Vol. III. p. 406.

⁴ *Correspondence*, Vol. III. p. 210.

supreme authority, his design to "banish every trace of that Revolution to which he owed his elevation," and his introduction of the appendages of monarchy. Lord Holland's testimony¹ is to the same effect. Napoleon, he says, had been inclined to assume the crown before 1804, but had been prevented by his generals, above all by Lannes; and again his monarchical sympathies were shown in his expressions about Voltaire and Rousseau—the latter he called "a mischievous man"—and by his preparation while First Consul for the ceremonies of a court.

As the English public was so well prepared for this *coup de théâtre*, it naturally fell rather flat in England. In fact, we may say that the prevailing sentiment was one of amusement, restrained by an aristocratic and intellectual contempt, such as is shown by Malmesbury,² when he describes the correspondence between Bonaparte and the Senate on the election to the Imperial throne: "More bombast, sophistry and vapid nonsense with worse logic never yet was written." Then came the question of recognition. Cornwallis adopts the typical English view when he is glad that Austria has not taken the lead in recognizing the new Emperor; on the other hand, Fox, still perhaps not altogether alienated from Napoleon, gives his view to Lord Holland thus:³ "What do you think of the fuss that is made about acknowledging the

¹ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 231.

² *Diaries and Correspondence*, May 18, 1804: Vol. IV. p. 310.

³ *Correspondence*, July 24, 1804: Vol. IV. p. 57.

new Emperor? Is there any folly like it in history? I do not recollect any. May not a people give their own magistrate any name they choose?" And again, he writes to Windham¹ that it would be equally polite and true to call George III, "the crazy king, old mad George," as to term Bonaparte "the Corsican usurper," "the mock Emperor," etc. No doubt Fox's logic was right, but yet there is something fine in the fact that to the Tories Napoleon at Austerlitz and Napoleon at Erfurt was, equally with Napoleon at St. Helena, nothing more than "General Bonaparte."

The part played by the Pope evoked some criticism. In the Commons Dr. Duigenan² declared that Bonaparte, "though a . . . tyrant . . . was so well convinced that supremacy in spirituals would essentially contribute to the support and establishment of his temporal power that he procured himself to be crowned by the Pope as supreme head of the Church," and the Pope is fiercely assailed by a writer calling himself Melancthon, an atrabilious Protestant, in a letter (1805) to Dr. Troy, titular Archbishop of Dublin. The unfortunate Pius is accused of "impiety and blasphemy" in crowning Bonaparte, thus making himself a party in the horrors of the Revolution and showing the basest ingratitude to the Bourbons; and in the same strain we find him declaring that beyond all prophecy, "Popery and the Revolution have met, Bonaparte and Pius have kissed each other." In this same letter the author ridicules the comparison

¹ Windham, *Papers*, Vol. II. p. 247.

² *Parl. Debates*, May 13, 1805.

of Bonaparte and Charlemagne in words which show how far the hatred of the former was due to the fact that he was a parvenu. Charlemagne found royalty in his cradle, he says (as if that was his most creditable achievement), and was never ambitious for the title of Emperor. Bonaparte is much more like Pepin in his seizure of the crown, with, however, the difference between a foreign adventurer and the representative of an old-established family. Pepin, further, was supported by the ancient nobility, whereas "the throne of the Corsican appears raised on heaps of slaughtered princes, and surrounded by a savage and vulgar group of base, low-born adventurers."

Two publications of very different merit and importance give a summary of the English view of Bonaparte at this period. The first, a mediocre work of some acuteness, is called *A Comparison of Bonaparte with Philip of Macedon* (1805). It is true that the pair have as much resemblance as that found by Fluellen in the careers of Alexander the Great and Henry of Monmouth; but this pamphlet is useful as formulating distinct accusations against Bonaparte's policy when it declares that both he and Philip were usurpers and deceivers by perjured treaties (Amiens), both tried to extirpate hostile states (? Italy), both were prodigal, both tried to ruin the commerce of rivals (Great Britain), both professed religion to help their schemes (Bonaparte in Egypt or the Concordat). Further, Bonaparte's employment of the Pope is compared with Philip's use of the Delphic oracle. The subjection of the Papal power aroused mixed feelings

in England—exultation that the Pope had been humiliated, together with an indignation against the humiliator which could easily turn into sympathy with the depressed religion. Englishmen would have welcomed the overthrow of the Pope had it been caused by any one except Bonaparte.

Far superior to this comparison is *The Conduct and Character of Napoleon Bonaparte*, by Mr. William Burdon of Morpeth. This writer deserves separate mention, because he is a man of shrewd and intelligent observation, because he is a typical Whig, and, finally, because he summarizes most of the current ideas of the time on this topic. He belongs to the same shade of opinion as Wordsworth and Coleridge, and therefore approved of the French Revolution. His work is partly by way of being a recantation of sentiments which he previously expressed, favourable to France. His liberalism is sufficiently evident from the fact that he admits that the Revolution has improved the condition of France; but, if Bonaparte represents the Revolution, it is merely the "scum of the Revolution" which he has united to the "dregs of the old monarchy" (*i. e.* he grants that Napoleon is a Jacobin, but denies him to be a true Revolutionist). Accordingly we find the "Robespierre on horseback" notion of Napoleon. "Bonaparte confirmed what Robespierre had begun, and converted the Government from being defensively to being essentially military." Again, Burdon shows himself a true Whig in imputing the disaster of Marengo to Pitt, and in declaring that the oppressions of Bonaparte are a revenge for the Allied Aggressions

of 1792; and in this connection we may notice a prophecy which none but a Whig would make: "The establishment of such an Empire may in the end overturn every throne in Europe."

To Burdon Napoleon is essentially a charlatan: His great object is to deceive and beguile the French people. "Corrupt, divide and terrify are the three great pillars of his throne," he says, and further accuses him of reintroducing frivolity and dissipation to take the place of serious political discussion in furtherance of his design to banish the remembrance of the Revolution. He contrasts Louis XIV and Bonaparte; the one cheated the French by flattering their vanity, the other by pretending to consult their interest. (Had Burdon written a year or two later the contrast would not have held good.) To this he adds a charge of hypocrisy. "Bonaparte endeavours to conceal the hideous deformity of his own nature and Government . . . by affecting a regard for popular prejudices and a respect for the established forms of society," and in his contempt for Bonaparte's charlatanry this Liberal rivals Malmesbury when treating of the Empire. "Tragedy, comedy and farce: all things serious, comical and ludicrous, unite to form the melodrama of empire." This and some other indications show that what finally influenced Burdon's mind against Napoleon was the latter's "practical attachment to monarchy," the fact that he recalled its forms and banished the simplicity of the Republican *régime*. When even Lord Holland can hardly forgive Napoleon for the Imperial title, it is not surprising to find that it disgusted the

main body of the Whigs and drove a Jacobin like Cobbett to unreasoning fury; and Burdon, as we have said, is very typically Whig. But in one respect he is curiously opposed to Whig opinion as represented by Coleridge. In complete contradiction to the latter, speaking of Brumaire, he says that he approves the means by which Bonaparte seized power, but not the use he made of it. In truth, Burdon had the shrewdness to observe the inefficiency of the sway of the Directory; and at the time no doubt welcomed the end which Bonaparte put to it. But, while denouncing Bonaparte's sway, he has the candour to admit that the Civil Code showed Bonaparte's talents for civil administration.

Further, though this book came out before the war of 1805, Burdon expressly states that the complete subjugation of Europe is necessary for Bonaparte's designs. Bonaparte, he says, first attacked the Roman Catholic religion. "To weaken, degrade and subvert it was his design," and "no doubt he will succeed." Secondly, according to Burdon, his ambition alone keeps up the enmity between England and France which otherwise is not so deeply rooted as under the *ancien régime*. It is to be noted that the Whigs never have a good word to say for the Bourbons.

Finally, while he admits that it is impossible to produce a finer piece of mechanism than Bonaparte's Government, that Government, he feels, cannot stand out against one long established; for "the newly assumed dignity of Bonaparte and his family has two difficulties to contend with: the want of

prejudice and the want of virtue." Further, it is dependent on the strength of the Revolutionary Party.

Burdon does not add much to our conception of Napoleon's character. "Bonaparte as a statesman lacks benignity of mind;" his distinctive traits are "duplicity and violence"; he has the "insatiable thirst for blood" of a "trembling tyrant." It is a pity that so intelligent a man should take so vulgar a view, especially as it leads him to make a prophecy which is astoundingly wrong. "Bonaparte will descend to posterity without dividing the opinions of mankind on his character." To this day, on no historical character, save, perhaps, Mary, Queen of Scots, has there been such division of opinion.

SECTION II

THE CONQUEST OF EUROPE, AUGUST 1805— AUGUST 1807

FOR the next two or three years there is a significant silence as to Napoleon. Biographers, even at a later date, deliberately skipped this period, owing to its misfortunes; and we find the pamphleteers thrown back once more on the joys of Jaffa, the delights of El Arish. The astounding series of victories from Ulm to Friedland won by the genius of Napoleon and the efficiency of his army appeared for the moment to silence criticism. Yet Englishmen were not cowed by this gigantic apparition. Now and again perhaps we may find the stoutest quailing, as Lord Paget did after Friedland—he then thought¹ that peace would be advantageous to England—but it was only for a moment; and the general spirit of the country refused to be subdued, or even greatly impressed.² Never has the British contempt for foreigners stood the country in better stead. The pious usually regarded the years as the time given over by Providence to the ravages

¹ *Paget Papers*, July 29, 1807: Vol. II. p. 312.

² For example, Horner (June 5, 1807) thinks foreign dangers in this country always sufficiently exaggerated, and that the danger from Bonaparte is transitory. A true Whig, he fears much more "the decay of liberty at home" (*Memoirs*, I. 406).

of the "Enemy of Mankind," and were confident of a reaction. But the great majority, though at times desperate of the result, with the grim tenacity of their race determined to fight on, and equally characteristically refused to bow the knee either to Bonaparte's power or to his genius, or to his title as the outward symbol of both. We do not notice any change in the attitude towards him either for good or bad. Englishmen were not to be induced by fear to admire Bonaparte, and, as in Coleridge's case, their bitterness was not increased by his "veni, vidi, vici" victories over the three great Continental Powers.

The feeling excited by Ulm and Austerlitz in England was pre-eminently one of disappointment, for the Third Coalition had roused great hopes in England, hopes which probably were due to recollections of the victories of Suvoroff in 1799. Ministers actually thought¹ that Bonaparte was taken unawares by the activity of Austria! Pitt above all was optimistic, so optimistic that at first he expressed "almost peevish disbelief"² at the rumours of Ulm; and his celebrated remark after Austerlitz: "Roll up the map of Europe; it will not be wanted for ten years," shows how high had been his hopes and how overwhelming their disappointment. Fox throughout took a clearer view, appreciated the weakness of the Austrian position, and foretold the result of the campaign.

¹ T. Grenville, October 7, 1805, in *Fortescue Papers*, Vol. VII. p. 308.

² Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, Vol. IV. p. 340. His remark was, "Don't believe a word of it: it is all fiction."

But the optimistic view was probably the more ordinary one. Lord Paget¹ actually *feared* that France would shrink from the struggle, an apprehension which shows that he appreciated the tenacity of Napoleon's character as little as the mass of force contained in the Grand Armée; and this feeling of confidence, though shaken by Ulm, was partially restored by Trafalgar,—Pitt thought that Trafalgar would counterbalance the impression of Ulm on the Continent, and would teach Bonaparte what his chance is of acquiring “ships, commerce, colonies,”—and had to a great extent revived when the armies were in presence of each other in Moravia: that is to say, among the Tories. Holland² says that Austerlitz “excited more concern than surprise in those who were acquainted with the character and the resources of the Continental Powers.” The general opinion was that the Allies had been screwed up to the sticking-point, and that in a mere question of arms they still had a good chance. There was a distinct tendency to underrate the genius of Bonaparte. Curiously enough, there are two letters placed side by side in the *Paget Papers*, each bearing the date of December 3; while Arthur Paget from Olmutz is giving details of Austerlitz, Harrowby writes from Berlin that “there seems every prospect of a change of fortune.” And on December 6 we find Addington³ writing, “I still indulge hopes that the honour of this country and the independence of Europe

¹ *Paget Papers*, September 30, 1805: Vol. II. p. 219.

² *Memoirs of Whig Party*, p. 207.

³ *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 399.

may yet be preserved"—words which show that Englishmen felt that Bonaparte was fighting for domination in Europe.¹ Nor was this all. When the first rumours of Austerlitz arrived, people with almost pathetic insistence declared it to be a French defeat, or, at worst, a drawn battle. Canning said that all that was wanted was "an official confirmation of all the good news."² Creevey³ tells amusingly enough how George, Prince Regent, explained to an admiring audience exactly where and how the French were beaten. And even people "in the know" were deceived. T. Grenville,⁴ for example, said that a drawn battle was rather a favourable circumstance, as tending to discourage the habit of capitulation, and as late as January 3 Castlereagh⁵ referred to the battle in these terms: "The battle of the 2nd did not answer . . . expectations, because the two victorious wings were obliged to retire in support of the centre. Nevertheless no ground was lost" (!). Fox, however, more clear-sighted, fully appreciated the hopelessness of the Emperor Francis' position.⁶ The eagerness with which Englishmen tried to believe in the more hopeful view shows how great was their anxiety, how important the campaign appeared to them, and explains the revulsion of feeling which took place, when finally the whole truth came out;

¹ Grey writes to Windham (December 13, 1805) about Bonaparte's plans of universal empire.

² *Pitt and the Great War*, p. 550.

³ *Creevey Papers*, I. 49.

⁴ *Fortescue Papers*, December 18: Vol. VII. p. 322.

⁵ *Letters, Despatches, etc.*, Vol. VI. p. 100.

⁶ *Windham Papers*, Vol. II. p. 241.

for Austerlitz was the grandest and most overwhelming of Napoleonic victories. Bonaparte was now clearly to be reckoned among conquerors—the Radicals (as we may term the extreme Whigs) had no scruple in admiring his achievements: in 1807 Whitbread¹ described the campaign of 1805 as “a series of successes then unparalleled,” and men felt that the Continent was now lost. Addington, whom we have seen so optimistic, writes in an utterly despondent tone (echoed by his brother): “On the sad history of Austerlitz I will not dwell. There is nothing to break the gloom. Europe is France: at least the continental part of it deserves no other name.”² In a similar strain Lord Auckland³ writes: “The continental catastrophe is most afflicting in many points of view and equally disgraceful—and almost equally dangerous—to all the old-established Governments in Europe.” He felt that the great victory of the new French Empire was a triumph of the new over the old, just as in 1813–14 the Tories regarded Leipsic and Paris as a triumph of the old over the new. This Book of Lamentations, to which nearly every party contributed, is supplemented even by Lord Grey,⁴ who said that if Austerlitz was as calamitous as he believed, continental confederacies are nonsense: “The game is too desperate even for Pitt, desperate as he now is.” The only true excuse for the defeat

¹ *Parl. Debates*, January 7, 1807.

² *Life and Correspondence*, December 31, 1805: Vol. II. p. 401.

³ *Fortescue Papers*, January 1, 1806: Vol. VII. p. 324.

⁴ *Creevey Papers*, December 29, 1805: I. 45.

was given by Windham : ¹ " Bonaparte's victories at Marengo and Austerlitz were achieved over armies and governments, not over peoples."

Yet there was no sign of yielding in England. Lord Paget probably voiced the feelings of the country when he wrote ² that no concession can secure any country against the " diabolical designs " of Bonaparte, and that he must be openly defied. And Southey, ³ after saying that it is quite likely that Bonaparte will propose peace after these " splendid victories," nevertheless trusts that England won't accept it, though at the same time apparently the only hope that he can see lies in the idea that Bonaparte will not be a long-lived man, that his successor will be an ordinary monarch, and that the generals of the Revolution will have died off.

Bonaparte's genius was now confessed. Canning ⁴ placed him beside Cæsar, Alexander and Frederick, as generals whose success was not due to the " enthusiasm of liberty or to the energy of a constitutional government "; and in this year (1806) Hazlitt ⁵ spoke of " a spirit of unbounded ambition, the insolence of almost unexampled success, resentment for supposed injuries and the most consummate military skill."

The interval of peace on the Continent did not produce any change in the English point of view; the hostility of the country was largely directed

¹ *Speeches*, July 9, 1805 : Vol. II. p. 339.

² *Paget Papers*, January 26, 1806 : Vol. II. p. 271.

³ *Letters*, January 1, 1806 : Vol. III. p. 12.

⁴ *Speeches*, June 6, 1806 : Vol. II. p. 242.

⁵ *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 356.

against Prussia, whose diplomacy was regarded, not unjustly, as one of the leading causes of the French triumph. She was regarded as the slavish tool of France, uniting "all that is odious in rapacity with all that is contemptible in servility";¹ and for a moment her rulers were as unpopular as Bonaparte. Englishmen were apt to consider any power which did not oppose Bonaparte as an accomplice in the enslavement of mankind. Austria in July 1813 is a case in point. Englishmen, much as they dreaded Bonaparte, could not understand the absolute terror which he inspired on the Continent.

Further, Bonaparte's power seemed confirmed by the Confederation of the Rhine. Sheridan² gives a fine description of this aspect of the Empire. "Bonaparte is surrounding France not with the iron frontier which distinguished the childish ambition of Louis XIV, but with kingdoms of his own creation, securing the gratitude of higher minds as the hostage, and the fears of others as the pledge, of his safety. His were no ordinary fortifications. His martello towers were thrones : sceptres tipt with crowns were the palisadoes of his entrenchments ; and kings were his sentinels."

Then³ came the Jena campaign, the impression of which in England is completely summarized in two lines from Wordsworth :⁴

¹ Fox, *Speeches*, April 23, 1806 : Vol. VI. 647.

² *Life*, Vol. II. p. 353.

³ Previously Bonaparte and Fox had negotiated for peace ; but the attempt does not seem to have attracted much attention. Holland says that if Fox had lived, Bonaparte might have returned to that spirit of conciliation.

⁴ Sonnet XXVII.

“Another year, another deadly blow,
Another mighty empire overthrown.”

“Never was any one battle so decisive,” Malmesbury¹ corroborates, “since it went to the entire overthrow of the Prussian monarchy.” He then goes into the causes of the disaster, which he sets forth with admirable clearness of vision; the Prussian army no longer reliable, the defence as well as the geographical position of the country “a rope of sand,” the inefficient characters of its last two rulers. Jena proved all this. The campaign throughout was a model of inefficiency and *nigauderie*. After this great battle there was very little hope for Prussia, and Englishmen had now learned what was likely to happen. That they had begun to understand Napoleonic policy is evident from a letter written on November 1 by Mr. C. Long² to Viscount Lowther. “Affairs there appear almost irretrievable. . . . I imagine we shall see Bonaparte erecting Saxony into a kingdom after making the Elector pay for his title, which he is very well able to do, and we shall probably see all the work of the great Frederick undone and Prussia reduced to insignificance—all this is very bad,”—a remarkable forecast, but not so remarkable as that of Fox,³ who, as early as December 25, 1805, foretold “the dismemberment of Prussia’s western territories, and finally the establishment of the French Empire in Europe.”

¹ *Diaries and Correspondence*, December 1806 : Vol. IV. p. 355.

² *Earl of Lonsdale’s Papers*, p. 218.

³ *Windham Papers*, Vol. II. p. 289.

From the same correspondent we can see how the last gleam of hope was quenched at Prenzlau. On November 24 he writes, "The Government do not give up the Prussian game as lost yet," but only to add in a postscript, "Prince Hohenlohe's surrender seems to put an end to all hopes of Prussia, and I believe it is certain that the King has sued for peace on any terms he can attain." Napoleon's two campaigns in Poland were not at all like the easy triumphs he had won over Austria and Prussia. The weather, the state of the roads, the distance from his base, the stubbornness of the Slavs, all militated against the crushing blows which he so loved to deal. So Englishmen did not yet despair, though they had none of the confidence so rudely shattered in 1805. They were impressed by the fine fight put up by the Russian rank and file. Their "good conduct," thought the *Edinburgh Review*,¹ even after Friedland, would induce Bonaparte to grant favourable terms; and before that battle we actually find Malmesbury² discussing a reconstruction of Europe, rather like that which took place in 1814—Prussia collecting her territories closer together—and preferring "exchange or arrangement" to Canning's "conquest and aggrandizement by force."

Such ideas were rudely dispelled by Friedland and its corollary, Tilsit. Whitbread³ spoke of "the fatal battle of Friedland, in which the remnant of the Prussian monarchy was consumed, the remaining

¹ July 1807, Vol. X. p. 381.

² *Diaries and Correspondence*, May 15, 1807: Vol. IV. p. 388.

³ *Parl. Debates*, February 29, 1808.

forces of the Russian Empire completely defeated . . . and the Emperor of Russia was prostrate at the feet of France." He considered Tilsit as "not only justifiable but indispensably necessary for the Emperor of Russia." The explanation which he gives for the gigantic power of France, the Whig reason that we have observed before, one too held by certain Tories, such as Addington, runs as follows: "Formidable indeed is France, but what has laid kings prostrate at her feet and what has ranged the population of nations under her banner? The infatuated policy of England during the last fifteen years. . . . We talk of the machinations, the artifices and the intrigues of Bonaparte; they all resolve themselves into four great battles. . . . You made it necessary for him to fight those battles; you combined the world against him; he has conquered the world combined, and he has combined the world against you." This opinion was also that of Fox,¹ who maintained that "our system, if it goes on . . . must end in making Bonaparte as much in effect monarch of Germany as he is of France," and of the *Edinburgh Review*, where we find such remarks as these: "Our wars with France have only served to aggrandize her and change her Government from a tumultuous democracy to a regular, enlightened and well-disciplined military despotism;"² or again, "The wars which her neighbours have waged against France have been the sole cause of her greatness."

Such a view was for the most part confined to

¹ *Correspondence*, December 3, 1805: Vol. IV. p. 123.

² April 1807, on the dangers of the country, Vol. X. pp. 18-19.

the Whigs. Some of them indeed disapproved of the third Coalition from its commencement. Thus on September 25, 1805, Horner wrote: ¹ "It is miserable to think of the hazards we have brought upon Europe by this war of bullying fear and folly." They now saw their worst fears—or should we say expectations?—realized. The Tory view is very different. They would never admit that Continental Confederacies were useless in themselves, and therefore ascribed defeat to the failure, the culpable failure, of one of the Confederates. Thus Malmesbury ² writes about Friedland: "Though not decisive as a battle, it was a complete victory over the mind of Alexander," and then speaks about the "panic and treachery" of that monarch at Tilsit. Nevertheless, the general impression was that for the moment no Continental Power could resist France, and, as Lord Hawkesbury ³ said, the balance of power was upset by her conquests, and above all by the Confederation of the Rhine.

This was the darkest hour for England and for Europe. The Spanish rising was yet to come: ⁴ all the great Powers of Europe had been humbled: Bonaparte was supreme. Nevertheless, not very long after Tilsit a more cheerful tone seems to pervade the letters, diaries and speeches of England. Even apart from Spain, there seems to have been more hope in England from 1807-12 than from 1805-7. The cause is not far to seek. From

¹ *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 311.

² *Diaries and Correspondence*, p. 390.

³ *Liverpool Memoirs*, p. 289.

⁴ The story that Pitt prophesied that Spain would save Europe is probably apocryphal: Pitt, unlike Canning, did not believe in the force of nationality.

1805-7 Englishmen had been dreading the worst on the Continent. In 1807 at Tilsit that very worst happened, and they soon found that on the whole it was not so very bad. In certain quarters, notably in the Near East, according to Arthur Paget, immense harm was done, but, generally speaking, the resistance to Napoleon was not appreciably weakened, nor was it lessened by what H. Scott calls Napoleon's "overbearing and unjust conduct after Austerlitz."

Much as Englishmen disliked the spectacle of the conquest of Europe, it could not fail to arrest their attention, and to make them inquire into the causes of this terrible phenomenon. In the first place, Napoleon's military genius seems to have been admitted frankly enough, or even exaggerated in order to diminish his other qualities; and his general policy and diplomacy were now the subjects of interest and, in the case of the Whigs, of admiration; though they could not see the full significance of the *idées napoléoniennes*, they were able to appreciate the general drift of his policy. Conspicuous among Whig organs was the *Edinburgh Review*. This periodical combated the view that the comparatively lenient terms granted to Russia were due to some unseen weakness in Bonaparte's position: this leniency was due to the keynote of his policy, which was to encroach gradually after the war as much as to move rapidly during it; and to give moderate terms was the only method by which he could make himself master of peace and war. Otherwise the beaten Power will in desperation have recourse to arms.

That this was a more or less accepted opinion,

at any rate among the Whigs, is proved by certain remarks in the House; *e.g.* Mr. Montagu¹ compared the policy of the French with that of the ancient Turks; in both cases there were short truces to secure conquests, short wars to enlarge them. Indeed, after Tilsit, Whitbread went so far as to declare that "French power is more progressive during peace than war."²

In connection with this point we may notice that the *Edinburgh Review*³ remarks on Napoleon's way of dealing with each Power separately. He now uses Russia to help in the Confederation of the Rhine as against Austria. After the intermediate Powers have been torn in pieces, her turn will come. He might have annihilated her after Friedland. "But the surer policy was that which was more patient and cautious," and the *Review* goes on to comment on the similarity both in cause and effect of the extension of the Roman and the French arms.⁴

¹ Whitbread (*Parl. Debates*, February 29, 1808) also commented on the wise policy of Napoleon in allowing the Russian army to escape after Friedland, so as not to make Russia an irreconcilable foe.

² *Parl. Debates*, January 7, 1807.

³ January 1809, Vol. XIII. p. 458.

⁴ Windham several years before (*Speeches*, November 4, 1801) compared the Republican French with the Republican Romans. Both conquer the world; both have a Carthage for their foe. Rome could not bring down Carthage at a blow, so a victorious war paved the way for an advantageous peace which in turn laid the foundation of a successful war; he goes on to speak of the grand qualities of command in which the French rival the Romans, the grandeur and wisdom of their plans, their boldness and constancy in executing them. No doubt he is thinking of Bonaparte.

SECTION III

THE WAR OF 1809 AND THE AUSTRIAN MARRIAGE

LEAVING for the moment the question of Spain, we must now take note of the year in which the turn of Austria appeared to have come round again, the year 1809.

This war is always a picturesque episode in the great epic of the Napoleonic period. It marks in a certain degree the turning of the tide. For now Napoleon was fighting to retain an empire. Hitherto he had only fought to gain one. In the second place, the forces put in motion on either side by their immensity imparted a certain grandeur to the military operations: 150,000 men fought at Aspern, more than twice that number at Wagram. Thirdly, it was a national war: It is curious that Austria, so pre-eminently connected with, and dependent on, its Court, should be the second Power to wage a war of peoples, instead of a war of courts.

All these points were recognized in England. The war was conceived as one to enable the Continent to throw off the yoke of Napoleon; and the French Emperor was thought to be fighting for dear life. Wordsworth wrote some fine Sonnets, though not his best, on the Tyrolese, and their resistance confirmed the impression already created by Spain, that by a really national resistance the

"great exertions" of Napoleon could be worn down and defeated. Finally, it is clear from the pages of *The Times* that the tremendous struggles on the Danube were watched with the keenest interest, keener indeed than was excited by the campaigns of 1813-14.

The first question that Englishmen asked themselves was, "Is it wise of Austria to fight *now*?" and the answer was in the affirmative, though so far had the idea of Bonaparte's invincibility taken hold of the minds of contemporaries that it was confessed that she had little chance. Even *The Times*¹ admits a feeling not optimistic, though "not notably pessimistic." Yet there were obvious elements of weakness in Bonaparte's position—he was entangled in Spain, as *The Times* points out; the same periodical pays Bonaparte a high though involuntary compliment when it says that the Rhenish contingents are "a body without a soul unless animated by the presence or spirit of Bonaparte";² a remark like this coming from one of his worst foes shows how completely the idea of Bonaparte's invincibility prevailed in Europe. In fact, the chief ray of hope in *The Times* comes from the appointment of the Archduke Charles, for a brief moment the chief hero on the European stage. Even after the event the *Edinburgh Review*³ characterizes the appointment of this general, together with the reforms of the army, as the best grounds on which Austria could hope for success.

¹ March 7, 1809.

² *Ibid.*

³ August 1811, on the campaigns of 1809: Vol. XVIII. p. 403.

Above all, we can trace the dread inspired by the notion of Bonaparte's universal empire. That this was his object was clear enough to all England; and Austria's revolt against it was regarded as a glorious, if almost hopeless, self-sacrifice to the cause of humanity. Thus Canning¹ maintained that Austria was right to attack rather than to "set an example of hopelessness and submission." Thus *The Times*² says that it is now or never for Austria. "If she cannot in prudence attack him now, she cannot without madness provoke him in future"; she is now fighting for her existence as an independent State.

At first the gloomiest prognostications seemed to be justified. Bonaparte overthrew the Austrians time after time in Bavaria. Nobody was discouraged because nobody was surprised. There are few comments on the "manœuvre of Eckmühl." *The Times*³ alone has one or two characteristic remarks, declaring that Bonaparte put the Rhenish troops into the forefront of the battle so as to exhaust them rather than the French, a stroke of diabolical policy to strengthen his hold on the Confederation; and again it bursts with indignation at Bonaparte's "revival of slavery" and "introduction of new features of barbarity," when he sent his Austrian prisoners as farm-servants into France. Then came the capture of Vienna—Bonaparte treated the hostile capital with great magnanimity. In this *The Times*⁴ saw only another stroke of Machiavellian policy—Bonaparte only dreads a

¹ *Speeches*, May 31, 1809: Vol. II. p. 421.

² March 7.

³ May 10.

⁴ June 6.

rising of peoples against him, so ran the argument; hence he varies the application of caresses and menaces. His distant marshals, *e. g.* in Portugal, are made butchers, while he himself enjoys a reputation for clemency.

Then suddenly and unexpectedly came the news that Bonaparte was defeated in a great battle. The enthusiasm over Aspern was astounding—it was as though the shadow of the inevitable and universal empire had lifted (and certainly not even Wagram made that cloud settle down so darkly over England as it had settled before Aspern, the first battle which showed that Napoleon was not superhuman, that he could be defeated): the result was, in the words of *The Times*,¹ “joy we hardly ever felt before,” for “never was there a brighter prospect of success,” and this delight is explained by a remark that now it is clear that the Continent is not supple enough to bend to Bonaparte, nor is he strong enough to break it. His universal empire is now impossible; he may oppress but cannot subdue. Dr. T. Zouch,² in a letter to the Earl of Lonsdale, manifests similar delight, though he fears that “the horrors of war will continue as long as the ferocity of the Corsican is allowed to rage unchecked,” an idea also found in *The Times*; for Napoleon, though defeated, still inspired terror. With one of its delicate little character touches it remarks, “Whatever disappointed rage and consummate art and dread of total ruin and consciousness of infinite guilt which only finds concealment

¹ June 8.

² *Earl of Lonsdale's Papers*, July 19, 1809, p. 234.

in the glare of victory, whatever these and a thousand other hideous passions and portentous qualities could do to repair his fortunes, will unquestionably be tried by him," and again more sanely, "We know that genius and talents—and no one can deny him these—display themselves to best advantage in difficult situations." Despite the still powerful terror of Bonaparte, however, Englishmen were able to regard Aspern as a heavy blow to his prestige. Castlereagh,¹ writing to Wellington, hopes that the moral effect of the victory on the Continent will be even greater than the physical. And even a year or two afterwards people looked back longingly to the epoch of the great victory, when "Austria for the first time overpowered France by superior skill and higher valour."² Canning³ spoke in 1810 of the turn of affairs which, "by poising equally for a month the chances of war, opened to the nations of Europe a cheering, though, alas, a short-lived, prospect of deliverance."

The hopes raised by Aspern were not hopelessly dashed by Wagram, a defeat which the optimists, e.g. *The Times*, did not consider irrevocable, "not a signal overthrow like Jena,"⁴ nor even by the

¹ Castlereagh, *Despatches*, etc., June 1809: Vol. VII. p. 83.

² *Edinburgh Review*, August 1811, on the campaign of 1809: Vol. XVIII. "Superior skill and higher valour" is hardly true. The Austrian success was due solely to numbers.

³ *Speeches*, June 15, 1810: Vol. III. p. 7.

⁴ July 24. But in a debate on January 26, 1810, Lord Porchester expressed a different opinion. He spoke of "Austria fallen never to rise again. On July 6 the conqueror of the world was obliged to act on the defensive, but the battle of Wagram extinguished all the hopes and expectations which Europe began to feel."

armistice of Znaim, for an idea was current that Napoleon was raising up foes like Hydras all around him; and his universal dominion was now believed to be impossible. It was not until the Austrian marriage that it was appreciated in England how severe a defeat Wagram was; even then the gloom has perceptibly lightened, and people, *e. g.* Lord Wellesley,¹ dare to hope that Bonaparte will be called to account for his crimes before an earthly tribunal. We may compare Horner's pessimism in July 1808² with the view which he expresses in January 1811. At the latter date he believes that the new French Empire will be perpetually disturbed by revolts, either in Austria or North Germany.³

Wagram is, like most Napoleonic victories, passed over in decent silence by English writers. H. Scott in his history does not even mention it; and the chief point of interest seems to have been whether it was fought by arrangement between Francis and Napoleon. Even Canning⁴ seems to hint at this when he speaks of Austria in 1813. His words are, "Even if Austria were to add the sacrifice of another daughter and *another army of 30,000 men.*" The *Quarterly*⁵ rightly ridicules this idea, but on the ground that Francis would never have consented. Apparently the Reviewer would have believed it of Napoleon—so wild were the current ideas of him at that time.

¹ *Parl. Debates*, June 24, 1811 (on the assassination of Bonaparte).

² See p. 118.

³ *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 72.

⁴ *Speeches*, November 17, 1813: Vol. III. p. 429.

⁵ October 1811, Vol. VI. p. 57.

The *Edinburgh Review*¹ is impressed with the grandeur of this war, "the most important campaign in modern times, whether we regard the unexampled scale of the military operations, the talents and valour displayed on both sides, or the consequences arising out of its issue."

Two of these consequences were the failure of the Walcheren Expedition and the Austrian marriage. A word or two on the former is necessary to show the English conception of Bonaparte's policy and "imperial strategy."

Lord Elgin's Memorandum in the Castlereagh despatches, etc.,² gives the stock reasons for this expedition: Bonaparte's dependence on France for men and money, the fact that France, and particularly Paris, is the centre of his power, his influence and his resources, and his terror of commotion in France evinced by his not arming the inhabitants; but it is clear from other sources that the idea at the back of Englishmen's minds was still the dread of invasion. It speaks volumes for the terror inspired by Bonaparte's genius and energy that now, when most of the French ships were rotting in English dockyards, and the few remains were closely blockaded by far superior forces, Englishmen should have still feared invasion, and still appreciated the fact that Bonaparte wished France to be a naval and colonial power. As late as December 3, 1811, Captain Milne writes,³ "Bonaparte seems deter-

¹ August 1811, on the campaigns of 1809: Vol. XVIII. p. 392.

² July 25, 1809: Vol VI. pp. 294-6.

³ *Milne Home Papers*, p. 151. Captain Milne was well informed: on the eve of the Russian war, Napoleon still cherished his darling project.

mined to have a navy." So Canning,¹ defending the Scheldt Expedition in the House, pointed out the importance which Bonaparte attached to his navy and his boasts to Europe of its increase. So the object of the force was not merely to help Austria, to deal a blow at Bonaparte's pride and to show him that he could not denude France of troops with impunity, but also to destroy his nascent navy. Liverpool¹ is still more explicit. The Scheldt, he says, is important as a base for an invasion of England; so our destruction of the arsenal at Flushing was a great stroke. How right these statesmen were in their estimate of Bonaparte's policy can be seen from his own remark: "Antwerp is a pistol pointed at the heart of England." From the debate on March 20, 1810, it is clear that the idea of an invasion was widespread. Craufurd describes it as "his chief and favourite project: it is the last act without which the great drama would be incomplete," and goes on to say that, now that Europe is at his feet, he will probably attempt it in a combined manner from the Scheldt, Boulogne, etc.; while General Tarleton, a determined Whig, remarks that England must expect an invasion from "the greatest warrior of this or any other time." Three years earlier the *Edinburgh*³ reviews, and agrees with, the work of an anonymous author on the dangers of England. This writer says that it is the freedom of England rather than our commercial prosperity or national influence which excites Napoleon's jealousy, draws a picture of

¹ *Speeches*, March 29, 1810: Vol. II. p. 440.

² *Memoirs*, p. 354.

³ April 1807.

the loss of freedom consequent on a successful French invasion, and points out that Bonaparte is pushing on his naval preparations, and can now risk the loss of an army if the expedition be unsuccessful, or the increased prestige of one of his generals, if it succeeds. After Friedland Horner thought that he would give advantageous terms to the Northern Powers, and would march his army back to Boulogne.¹ From these various remarks we can see that nothing appeared too audacious for Napoleon to attempt. However much the press might decry him, there is no doubt that in the great years of the Empire, 1805-12, even Englishmen secretly regarded him as almost superhuman. Canning² thinks it worth while to combat the "prevalent idea" that it was useless to resist Bonaparte, that "his resolves were insurmountable, his career not to be stopped." He said that Bonaparte's fortune "is fortune, not fate." As we have seen, the first blow to this idea of invincibility came at Aspern; it was finally overthrown in 1812, and the reaction from it came in 1814, when he was considered "a very ordinary man."

On the other corollary of the war, the Austrian marriage, English opinion was sharply divided (though as to Napoleon's motives there was little dispute. They are clearly put forth by C. Grant in the House on November 4, 1813. "By a connection with ancient families, he had hoped to clothe his new greatness with something of prescriptive pomp and veneration"). The Radicals

¹ *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 406.

² *Speeches*, June 15, 1808 : Vol. II. p. 377.

regarded it as the great blunder of his life. Lord Holland¹ said that he pursued his career of victory until his second marriage—his cause had hitherto been that of the Revolution against the Counter-Revolution—but: “That connection—which in my humble opinion degraded him, not her—altered his designs both at home and abroad, tempted him to assimilate his Government more and more to other monarchies, and deluded him with the hope that the princes of Europe might . . . be reconciled in the form of an hereditary monarchy to a title derived from the people.” Cobbett—who did not admire Napoleon as Holland did—attributes his fall to this marriage above everything else; the French could forgive him his tyranny on account of his military glory, but not his Austrian marriage, his desire to be of the old royal race, and his bringing of a niece of Marie Antoinette into France.² It is curious to find *The Times* involuntarily and unconsciously endorsing his last remark, when on August 20, 1812, it says that the acclamations given to Marie Louise (Iphigenia as it elsewhere calls her) are a forcible reminder of those given to Marie Antoinette.

This idea did not find much favour with the Tories, who of course regarded a connection with one of the old dynasties as the most extraordinary piece of luck that could possibly have befallen the Corsican adventurer. Of course they were horribly shocked—much as an aristocratic coterie is shocked when a parvenu, with whom they will have no

¹ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 235.

² *George IV*, Vol. I. section 205.

connection, makes an exalted marriage. They laid stress on the "painful feelings" of the Emperor Francis, and their scribblers and caricaturists depicted Marie Louise as filled with intense detestation for her low-born mate, whereas in reality she loved him as far as her shallow nature would permit. They also regarded it as a great stroke of luck for him politically. The *Quarterly* for October 1814¹ pours scorn on the idea that the Austrian marriage was his undoing. It "for two years maintained his throne and finally saved his life," and during the Armistice of Pleiswitz *The Times*,² in attacking Austria, speaks of the "Austro-Corsican Junto," and declares that "the family alliance is a canker at the root of Austrian politics."

At the moment of its taking place it appeared a confirmation of Bonaparte's power, and an indication that he was winning acceptance among the old-established dynasties of Europe, an idea which did not increase his popularity in England.

Vol. XII. p. 246.

² July 17, 1813.

SECTION IV

SPAIN

BEFORE the Austrian War was thought of, however, the treachery of Bayonne and the Massacre of Madrid had taken place. Both drew upon Napoleon a yell of execration from England, in which a cheer of admiration for the Spaniards mingled. Malmesbury's ¹ comment is, "Among all his attempts at usurpation, Bonaparte never exhibited any equal to this, and never did any one exist in which every principle of truth, good faith and honour was so unblushingly violated." Castle-reagh, cold, passionless Castlereagh, inveighs ² against his "deliberate and unparalleled system of violence and perfidy," while that Whig organ, the *Edinburgh Review*,³ is not behind-hand; "outrageous usurpation," "shameful alternations of flattering promises and ambiguous menaces—of barefaced and unblushing falsehood and open ferocious violence"; "atrocious as it is, it harmonizes exactly with the rest of that policy by which for some time the rest of Europe has been governed," are some of its expressions. Canning is still noisier :

¹ *Diaries and Correspondence*, 1808 : Vol. IV. p. 406.

² *Despatches*, etc., June 8, 1808 : Vol. VI. p. 365.

³ October 1808 on the French usurpation in Spain : Vol. XIII. p. 217.

“ Good God ! ” he cries,¹ “ the generous warfare begun by Bonaparte against unoffending Spain the generosity of him—the outrageous violater of every sacred obligation, the bloody and unfeeling destroyer of the rights of sovereigns and the independence of nations.” He then proceeds to palliate the atrocities of the Spaniards.

The most important result in England was that Napoleon’s treachery threw all parties heart and soul into the war. This union of Whig and Tory is finely expressed by Wordsworth in his pamphlet on the Convention of Cintra. He gives a sketch of the various standpoints of his, *i. e.* the Whig, party.² He bewailed the war of 1793, but, after Amiens, finding that the “ spirit of selfish tyranny and lawless ambition was embodied in the French Government, he came to regard the war of 1803 as just and necessary, especially as now the war was a really national one on England’s part. Yet his attitude, he continues, was one of constraint—the reconciliation with the Government had too much of selfishness and fear in it, too much despondency, too little sunshine. What we wanted was the stimulus of a great cause, and this stimulus, which brought almost perfect unity to England, was found in Spain; for our support of Spain gave our actions “ an origination and direction unquestionably moral.” And the *Edinburgh Review* for July 1808, reviewing Whitbread’s Letter on Spain, explains this unanimity by the fact that France was never before so plainly in the wrong; hitherto she has not

¹ *Speeches*, June 15, 1810 : Vol. III. p. 42.

² *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 40.

always been the aggressor ; and in any case the blame of breaking the peace fell constantly on the enemies of France. Now, however, she has thrown off the mask by attacking her submissive ally. The "moral direction" of our policy is brought out by yet another Whig, Sheridan.¹ "Let Spain see," he cried, "that we are not actuated by the desire of any petty advantage to ourselves, but that our exertions are to be directed solely to the attainment of the grand and general object, the emancipation of the world." A moral opposition to Bonaparte's universal dominion and to his method of securing it is the keynote struck at this period, and thus we find Lord and Lady Holland, really consistent in apparent inconsistency, supporting the cause of Spain not only by words, but by their actual presence in the country.

Above all, this opposition to Bonaparte was based on the principle of nationality, of which Spain provided the most striking example. Bonaparte with his levelling world-empire was attacking this principle, and its resistance to his power was to be seen in Austria (1809), Russia (1812), Germany (1813), and was finally to overthrow him. Wordsworth, in the above-mentioned pamphlet, gives noble expression to this idea. He looks forward to the "happy day" when the natives of Italy and the natives of Germany "shall each dissolve the pernicious barriers which divide them and form themselves into a mighty people."² In a published letter, written to Captain Pasley, R.E. (1811), he

¹ *Speeches*, June 15, 1808 : Vol. V. p. 370.

² *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 152.

utters the same opinion. His ideal is the formation of France, Italy, Spain and Germany into independent nations, without unnecessarily curbing the power of France. He then attacks the Napoleonic idea of complete domination, first in the abstract. "Woe to that land," he cries, "whose power is irresistible," for "if a nation have nothing to oppose or fear without, it cannot escape decay and concussion within." Therefore progress in conquest must be limited, and is therefore not a fit object for the exertions of a great people. In the second place, he attacks it in the concrete—France has destroyed most of the detestable governments of Europe only to substitute another tyranny. Thus the nations have now been taught that domestic oppression must be succeeded by subjugation from without. Hence the nations are now prepared to shake off the tyrant and to establish a new balance of power based on nationality, merging the smaller States. Above all, there is need for civic virtue. As the idea of every State should be national happiness, *i. e.* the happiness of a true national life, not one artificially imposed on a nation, Wordsworth maintains that even if the Usurper ameliorated the condition of Spain—as indeed he did, *e. g.* by abolishing the Inquisition—the people would regard such prosperity as loss compared with the forfeiture of nationality.¹

¹ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 205. It is interesting to read these words in the light of some remarks made by Napoleon at St. Helena; he declared that one of his chief objects would be to conquer Spain in order to enlighten her. "And what if they resisted?" "Ils succomberaient," was the truly Napoleonic reply.

Coleridge and Southey are, for the most part, merely feeble repetitions, and, in the former's case, actual plagiarists of Wordsworth. Both attack Napoleon with startling fury, especially Coleridge, who at times seems almost insane;¹ and Southey is prone to idealize the Spaniards most undeservedly. Nevertheless, they too grasp the principle of nationality.

Coleridge in the *Courier*² contrasts the stubborn resistance of Spain with the easy overthrow of the German powers, especially Prussia, where "a majority of the higher ranks consisted of Gallicized persons, and so she was subdued in effect before the French army put the last seal on the conquest by the battle of Jena." Hence comes the value of an assertive nationality, such as that of the Spaniards, opposed as they are in many ways to the French. We have exactly the same idea in Southey.³ "A great military despotism in its youth and full vigour, like that of France, will and must beat down corrupt establishments and worn-out governments, but it cannot beat down a true love of liberty or a true spirit of patriotism;" and the *Edinburgh Review*⁴ says that as the Spaniards are not handicapped "by the sloth and feebleness of a corrupted Court," they will not make the "fatal errors which prepared for the French armies the way to Vienna and Berlin." (The corruption of the old Courts of Europe was a stock theme with the Whigs.)

¹ See Appendix A.

² December 15, 1809 and January 20, 1810: Vol. II. p. 675.

³ *Letters*, July 1808: Vol. III. p. 155.

⁴ July 1808: Vol. XII. p. 438.

Ministerialists adopted exactly the same tone. Liverpool says ¹ that elsewhere the people were neutral—Spain was an armed nation; and Canning,² a Liberal in foreign, a Tory in domestic politics, expresses this view in a speech on the affairs of Spain, and exactly two years later, on the Vote of Credit Bill,³ claims that moral force has gone over to her enemies from France, where formerly “a liberal and enlightened philosophy had brought forth the spirit of Revolutionary freedom—had reared this new and formidable birth to a sudden maturity of strength and vigour. But now the spirit at least, if not the strength, has changed sides. France, as if . . . the soul of the slain had transmigrated into the slayer, is herself become a military despotism. She is opposed in that character to the new-born independence of Spain.” Hence we may argue, he proceeds, that the principle which caused the energies of France no longer exists: “The spirit of liberty in France has been extinguished;” the *moral* force has gone over to the Spaniards. Therefore the war in Spain involves not only the essential interests of England, but “the hopes, if hope remain, of subjugated but yet restless Europe.” He appreciates the beginning of the great struggle between the Revolution concentrated in Napoleon and the growing nationalism of Europe. Finally, in his speech on the Marquis of Wellington,⁴ he is able to say that the “Revolution of 1808 seemed as

¹ *Parl. Debates*, February 22, 1810.

² *Speeches*, June 15, 1808: Vol. II. p. 349.

³ *Ibid.* June 15, 1810: Vol. III. pp. 8–9.

⁴ *Ibid.* July 7, 1813: Vol. III. p. 421.

if given by Providence in contrast to that mighty and dreadful Revolution, whose tremendous success had almost led mankind to believe that success was inseparably linked to the car of those who assailed with insatiable fury every established institution." Thus to Canning the nationalism of Spain is above all conservative, and is, as such, opposed to the great radical destroyer. To Francis Horner, on the other hand, Spanish Nationalism presented itself as a Revolutionary force. He considered ¹ that the new war would perhaps be the most decisive test of "the genius and effects of the French Revolution," inasmuch as the contest would lie between a regular army and an uprising people. Therefore, for the same reason that made him previously wish for the success of the French, he now desires the victory of the Spaniards, in whom "the genius and effects of the French Revolution" are embodied. Further, he held that a failure on the part of the Spaniards would be quite fatal to the liberty of Europe.

The power of nationality being so fully admitted, it was easy to deduce that Bonaparte's invasion of Spain was a very considerable error. The *Edinburgh Review* ² describes his removal of the Spanish Court as "the most unaccountable step of his life." Three months later, Captain Moore ³ goes so far as to say: "Bonaparte has overshot his mark, and, I have great hopes, has done for himself. However, he will die game;" and Mr. Hutchinson,⁴ in

¹ *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 427.

² July 1808: Vol. XII. p. 444.

³ *Creevey Papers*, October 11, 1808: Vol. I. p. 90.

⁴ *Parl. Debates*, June 7, 1811. See Appendix B.

his panegyric on Bonaparte's achievements, has to exclude the Peninsula from the roll of "plans wisely conceived and ably executed." It was obvious, as Mr. Jacob sensibly pointed out in the House,¹ that Bonaparte could have derived far greater advantages from that country by governing it, as formerly, by his influence than by attacking it.

To the idea of the strength of nationality there were but few opponents. Castlereagh,² it is true, a thorough statesman of the old school and a fine type of it, a man who disbelieved in enthusiasms and moral forces, attributed the success of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic arms not to enthusiasm, but to *force*, the force of the whole nation applied to war; and argued from this that enthusiasm alone would not save the Spaniards. Malmesbury, a man of similar stamp, seems to adopt the same view, and certain of the Opposition, *e. g.* Grey and Curwen, always took a gloomy view of English and Spanish chances.

The idea of the "Spanish ulcer" also occurred to contemporary English observers. The French power, said Eldon, the Lord Chancellor,³ can never be confirmed in Europe until Spain is conquered; for Spain will draw off so great a part of her resources and will cause other nations to make war, *e. g.* Austria in 1809; and the danger to French prestige, and therefore to Bonaparte's position, is perceived in 1811 and foretold even in 1809.

At the time when Bonaparte attacked Spain there

¹ *Parl. Debates*, March 9, 1810.

² *Despatches*, etc., August 25, 1809.

³ *Parl. Debates*, March 9, 1810.

was high controversy in England with regard to the Copenhagen expedition. This achievement certainly did not "give a moral direction" to our politics, and is blamed by men of such opposite views as Sheridan and Sidmouth, on the same grounds, viz., that England is descending to the moral level of Bonaparte. "I have never yet despaired of my country," wrote Sidmouth,¹ "nor shall I yet unless the detestable doctrine of fighting Bonaparte with his own weapons—those, I mean, of mere strength without right, and of temporary convenience without regard to justice—should be sanctioned by Parliament. . . . Bonaparte has swelled his triumphs by a victory over the good faith and moral character of Great Britain;" and the Whig orator² thought that Bonaparte must be delighted at our seizure of the Danish fleet. "In that act he saw our character blended with his own. He found in it an indemnity for the past and a security for the future." Yet another shade of opinion, represented by Windham,³ agreed in the condemnation: "a fair sample of the new mode of fighting Bonaparte with his own weapons," which "really gives a handle to Bonaparte, who may now sneer at our morality"; and Whitbread, in 1809,⁴ was able to point to our aggression on Denmark as a parallel to Napoleon's on Spain. Both were atrocious. Apparently after Bayonne, Napoleon's friends can no longer defend him by pointing out

¹ *Life and Correspondence*, September 24, 1807: Vol. II. p. 481.

² *Speeches*, June 17, 1808: Vol. V. p. 372.

³ *Ibid.* February 3, 1808: Vol. III. p. 102.

⁴ *Parl. Debates*, January 13, 1809.

his excellence, but only by insisting on the equal atrocity of his enemies. Thus in the same debate General Matthews and Sir F. Burdett say that the conduct of England in India and Ireland is as bad as that of Bonaparte.

Canning¹ defends the expedition on the ground of expediency—he saw clearly that by his projected seizure of the Danish and Portuguese fleets, Bonaparte was drawing a net round England, to intercept her commerce : he mentions the possibility of a great war between the whole of the Continent and England which must be deferred as long as possible. His general defence of the morality of the act is based upon Bonaparte's immorality, and runs as follows : The responsibility for all present miseries, atrocities and calamities rests with Bonaparte, "that great modern expositor of the law of nations," There now no longer exists a "community of States," connected and protected by public law and reciprocal rights, but only "one devouring State which ignored the rights of other nations." "Bonaparte had dictated to all the nations of the Continent, and had erased every vestige of public law in Europe."² To modern judges Canning's plea must hold good : nevertheless, the Copenhagen affair had the unfortunate effect of dividing English opinion, which had so nearly become unanimous owing to fear and detestation of Napoleon.

¹ *Speeches*, February 3, 1808 : Vol. III. p. 306 *sqq.*

² A further reason was given by Lord Liverpool, who wrote that "without ships, commerce and colonies, our enemy would never be able to humble Great Britain, and this grand blow would for ever prevent the attainment of his object."

SECTION V

THE EMPIRE AT ITS HEIGHT

FROM 1807-12 the Napoleonic Empire was at its height : 1808 (Erfurt) and 1810 (the Austrian marriage) are its two high-water marks. Its tremendous military force, its extent, its apparent success in welding together various elements, its concentration, together with the novelty of the spectacle, were equally impressive ; and to obtain a true idea of this impression we must search rather in the productions of those who wrote before 1812 than of those who were wise after the event. The fact that Wordsworth was able to perceive weaknesses in this giant fabric in 1809 and 1811 is much more important and valuable than any observation, however acute, made on the Empire after its fall had fully exposed these weaknesses, and, further, enabled the observer to get hold of a great deal of material on the subject.

In the first place, the grandeur of the edifice is appreciated, and, by a few, the greatness of its builder, though, in Horner's view, " the direct effect of his name and genius, so prodigious for a certain period of time, is at length almost sunk in the change of the world which he has effected." ¹ Colonel Hutchinson in the House on June 17, 1811, pro-

¹ *Memoirs*, January 18, 1811 : Vol. II. p. 70.

nounced a long and elaborate panegyric on the greatness of the Empire and the wisdom of the steps by which it was erected.¹ His object is not unpatriotic—it is to point out the grandeur of Bonaparte's efforts compared with the puny attempts of England to check them; and to show the naval danger to England from Bonaparte now that he has so much of Europe in his power; and from the *Edinburgh Review* (July 1808)² we can gather what a shadow was cast by the apparently inexhaustible resources and ruthless energy of the Empire. And so Horner in 1808 contemplated the possibility of a duration of the military Empire over ages before its discipline degenerated: "and ages more," he adds, "of darkness and idleness might protract the shame and misery of Europe."³ Even in 1814 the fabric was still impressive. Mr. E. Cooke on January 5 of that year, writes in the following strain to Castlereagh:⁴ "The more I look at it (*i. e.* the French Empire), the more terrible does it appear: the despotism is so perfectly organized and centred for the purposes of internal order and submission, revenue and military force, so easily and rapidly managed and directed, and its instruments so animated, so ingenious, so versatile, so adventurous, so brave, that it appears to me that there never existed in the world so formidable a machine."

It is from Wordsworth, however, that we get the fullest, the deepest and, though certainly not the

¹ See Appendix B.

² On Whitbread's Letter on Spain.

³ *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 427.

⁴ Castlereagh, *Despatches*, etc., 3rd Series, Vol. I. p. 138.

most dispassionate, the most valuable view of the Empire as it appeared to Englishmen. From his *Convention of Cintra* (1809) and his letter to Captain Pasley (1811) we get an admirable idea of the English attitude of the day—the attitude of a thorough hater of Napoleon, but yet one not so blinded as to refrain from finding reasonable grounds both for his hatred and for the hatred-inspired belief that its object is not impossible to destroy.

Wordsworth attributes the strength of the French Empire, and indeed the Empire itself, to the power of the French Revolution. This prosperity of Napoleon's, he says, now so terrible, "is the child of noble parents, Liberty and Philanthropic Love." "It is the fallen Spirit triumphant in misdeeds—which was formerly a blessed angel."¹ The *Quarterly* for October 1811,² in a different vein but with much the same meaning, comments on Bonaparte's prompt seizure of opportunities, his skill in consolidating a mighty power after the volcano of the Revolution.

Wordsworth does not deny the Empire certain elements of strength. In the first place, there is the natural strength of a new-born despotism. Wordsworth is fully impressed by the concentration of energy in France :

"Who stands among us now, an armed creature,
Whose panoply is not a thing put on,
But the live scales of a portentous nature."³

He writes⁴ that despotism usually is but another

¹ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. 128.

² Vol. VI. p. 38.

³ *Sonnets*, XXVIII. (Ode).

⁴ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 139.

word for weakness, but in a new-born military despotism, especially if preceded by a popular constitution, this weakness is not found; "but it possesses for the purposes of external annoyance a preternatural vigour," owing to various causes, *e. g.* men selected for posts on account of fitness alone; promptness of decision as the power is concentrated in one man; rapidity of motion and confidence of support. This side of the Empire is also brought out by the *Edinburgh Review*, a periodical which, though on the same side politically as Wordsworth, is very much more moderate in its tone towards Napoleon. Speaking of Spain,¹ it fears for the result of the war when considering the French army, that "tremendous engine," especially as "we cannot see any of the vices or follies of old governments creeping into the French military system," *i. e.* kept mistresses, striplings of high rank, booby dignitaries. "But, alas," it continues, "the dynasty of Bonaparte is yet too fresh for such blunders as these; it cannot afford to indulge in those *dulcia vitia* of old-established governments, and the wretched truth really is, that at the present moment he has a system of policy and military power which unites in itself almost every benefit of a revolutionary government with a far greater degree of order and regularity than ever before presided over the affairs of the most ancient monarchies." (The last sentence is a full explanation of the greatness of the Empire, and shows that Englishmen could appreciate its merits.) We get a similar idea of the impression made by the "dreadful energy and portentous talent

¹ July 1808, Vol. XII. p. 440.

and activity " of the French Government in a review of April 1810.¹ Yet here it points out a weakness. Bonaparte's power rests on his providing incessant occupation for the army; and this in modern times is impossible.

Closely connected with this idea of a strong young despotism is the conception, brought out by Canning,² that the absoluteness of Bonaparte's power is greatly in his favour. Full scope is thus given to all his powers and views; he has irresponsible freedom for all his acts; he can wield at will the whole population of his Empire and its Allies. His successes are magnified, his failures passed over. Unity of counsel, liberty of action, secrecy of design, boldness of spirit, qualities most useful for war, are the advantages which Bonaparte possesses over us. Some years later, "Vetus,"³ of *The Times*, adds another advantage—Bonaparte is a tyrant who tolerates no tyranny but his own. "The gaudiest marshal is compelled to practise the most entire military submission."

To return to Wordsworth; the second element of strength in the French Empire is to be found in the character of its ruler:⁴ not that Wordsworth admires his genius: far from it, he calls him a man "of very ordinary talent": no, the secret of his success lies in "his utter rejection of the restraints of morality—in wickedness which acknowledges no limit but the extent of its own power. Let any one reflect a moment, and he will feel that a new world

¹ On the French Government.

² *Speeches*, March 29, 1810: Vol. II. p. 477.

³ August 13, 1813.

⁴ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 140.

of forces is opened to a Being who has made this desperate leap. It is a tremendous principle to be adopted and steadily adhered to by a man in the station which Bonaparte occupies; and he has taken the full benefit of it." The third element of strength is the command of almost the whole military force of Europe.

The mention of this last source of power makes him discuss its fragility.¹ "Yet the enormity of this power has in it nothing inherent or permanent;" and Wordsworth is a true enough prophet, though in 1809 a bold one, when he declares that two signal defeats would overthrow it, and his vassal nations would then desert him. It is formidable, "not because it is impossible to break it, but because it has not yet been penetrated." He compares a Scottish pine-forest, strong until the wind breaks down the outer barrier of trees: once it can get to the trees within, it can rapidly level them. Each of the sources of strength, the members of this "Colossus with feet of clay and trunk of molten brass," have their weakness; the reason is that "everything which is desperately immoral, being in its constitution monstrous, is of itself perishable."² Southey, as usual, echoes his words. One defeat, he says,³ will destroy Bonaparte; his power outside France rests on force, in France on prestige: and Sir Walter Scott⁴

¹ *Prose Works*, p. 141.

² *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 163.

³ *Letters*, July 6, 1809: Vol. III. p. 241. He thus improves on Wordsworth, who put the number of necessary defeats at two.

⁴ *Letters from Lockhart's Life*, April 11, 1811: Vol. II. p. 340.

writes that the downfall of his military fame will be the signal of his ruin.

Wordsworth finds, furthermore, that even Bonaparte's character contains the germs of ruin. By acknowledging no mastery but power he has outlawed himself from society and "stands upon a hideous precipice." And again, a tyrant "has a narrow domain of knowledge," and is inexorably cut off from "all that is lovely, dignified and exhilarating in the prospect of human nature." It was this ignorance which caused Bonaparte "to work blindly against his own purposes by laboriously and foolishly taking to his bosom the old monarchy of Spain." ¹

Thirdly, he maintains that any improvement in the condition of France is due to the Revolution and not to the Tyranny. The works of peace, he declares, cannot flourish in a despotic country where even the despot's benevolence is more pernicious than his cruelty. "Napoleon's language is, 'I have bestowed, I have created'; but commerce, manufactures and agriculture cannot be bestowed: they must grow up. But a tyrant has no joy in their excellence: it is an insult to his own attributes." ² He enlarges on this topic in the letter to Pasley,³ and in so doing hits upon the idea that it was the Industrial Revolution that pulled England through the war. His argument is the same as that above, and then he adds that the revenue of the Empire must rapidly diminish. The harvest reaped by the army from conquered countries is now over.

¹ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 123. ² *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 159.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 199-200.

"What will it avail him," he goes on, "the command of the whole population of the Continent, unless there be a security for capital somewhere existing, so that the mechanic arts and inventions may thereby be applied in such a manner that an overplus may arise from the labour of the country which shall find its way into the pocket of the State for supporting its military and civil establishments?" He contrasts the wealth and population at command for military purposes in this "happy land," due to our domestic industry and the mechanic arts, not to foreign trade, with the spirit of Bonaparte's Government, which, like the conquerors of the new world, "goes about raving for 'gold, gold,'" and in its rapacity does not care for "the slow but mighty and sure returns of any other produce."¹ Accordingly the mind of England is above that of France in practical philosophy, true liberty, and therefore in material prosperity, and so is bound to triumph.

Thus far Wordsworth; but the mention of political economy at once brings us to the Continental System. As Wordsworth implies, it was the Industrial Revolution which supplied the antidote to the Continental System. Hence Britain was not ruined, though her trade was hampered, and she was forced into war with America partly on account of it.

On the whole we find it derided, when not exe-

¹ Cp. J. Scott (*Visit to Paris*, p. 184), who dilates on Bonaparte's "improvidence." His mind was entirely fixed on the present. Hence his system "of living on the principal and neglecting the future for the sake of enjoying the present;" "He behaved as rashly as the possessor of a fine mansion would, who should cut up his beautiful mahogany doors, because for a moment he was in need of wood to kindle a fire."

crated. Two caricatures, rather better than the ordinary ones, represent the British attitude. The first depicts "The giant Commerce overwhelming the puny blockade," and the other shows a skinny Bonaparte on one side of an enormous wall feeding sparingly upon meagre soup, while on the other a bulky John Bull is regaling himself with beef and beer. Nor did the system escape Coleridge's temperate pen.¹ With characteristic elegance, "I have styled Bonaparte a wretch and a monster," he writes, ". . . because in order to gratify his rage against one country, he made light of the ruin of his own subjects; that to undermine the resources of one enemy, he would reduce the Continent of Europe to a state of barbarism; and by the remorseless suspension of the commercial system destroy the principal source of civilization and abolish a middle class throughout Christendom." *The Times*, which in power of abuse can hold its own with Coleridge, repeats this idea² in different words, and Canning³ sums up his motives by saying that the maritime power of Britain was the only impediment to his universal aggrandizement. Hence "he would destroy all commerce in order to injure this country, which he identified with it." Therefore it was necessary for him to make *all* nations independent of commerce; "*omnis ferat omnia tellus.*" And the impracticability of the Continental System was an argument employed by those who

¹ *Essays on his Own Times*, December 21, 1809 : Vol. II. p. 646.

² April 17, 1813.

³ *Speeches*, February 3, 1808 : Vol. II. p. 324.

wished for the repeal of the Orders in Council, as by Lord Stanley in the House of Commons;¹ he emphasized this point by remarking on the weakness of Bonaparte's navy. This too was Lord Holland's idea.² The system, he writes, "was so much at variance with the interests both of nations and of individuals, that even where the governments were subservient to France, they found it impracticable to maintain so unnatural a policy," while he also considers³ that Napoleon's project was helped by English retaliation, and gives as a parallel Sindbad pelted with cocoa-nuts by monkeys; a view held more strongly and put more clearly by the *Edinburgh Review*.⁴ Its argument runs: We shall not force Bonaparte to peace by the commercial distress of his dominions. He does not want commerce: his armies don't need it; and he does not care about his subjects. This weapon, *i. e.* the Orders in Council, will recoil on ourselves; as is clear by the way in which he has taken advantage of it to seal up the Continent. Thus it has actually seconded his designs. Nevertheless, though Englishmen might sneer for the time at the Continental System, they were glad to see it at an end. Sir Walter Scott writes on December 10, 1813:⁵ "The redemption of Holland has a gratifying effect on the trade of Leith;" and Canning, in a speech on Foreign Treaties,⁶ actually says that the *best* result to us is

¹ *Parl. Debates*, April 28, 1812.

² *Further Memoirs of Whig Party*, p. III.

³ *Memoirs of Whig Party*, p. 235.

⁴ January 1809: Vol. XIII. p. 462.

⁵ *Letters*, Vol. III. p. 103.

⁶ November 17, 1813: Vol. III. p. 429.

the ruin of the Continental System. "The incompressible nature of commerce has defied the most powerful tyranny."

The internal administration of Bonaparte's Empire was not, of course, fully understood, at any rate at the time in England. We have seen how Wordsworth maintained that any improvement in France was not due to Napoleon; we find *The Times*¹ equally prejudiced: "Whatever may be said of his civil talents is stark nonsense. As a civil governor his blunders and the ruinous nature of his projects would long since have covered him with ridicule, had they not been lost in the blaze of his military success;" and a clergyman, in a letter to *The Times*,² brings up a still more fearful indictment of his administration; he attributes the impiety of Bonaparte's sway to the number of theatres in France, and adds with sufficiently startling abruptness: "That ruler is now a scourge in the hands of an avenging God to punish those who despise His righteous laws." Lord Holland³ takes a juster view—it is true that he wrote considerably after the event—he has high praise for Napoleon's administration. "Never was government, in France at least, so little military . . . never was justice more steadily and equally administered between man and man, and even between government and subject;" but he goes on to add that at the later period of the reign, Napoleon himself was the only security against abuse. Other writers favourably remarked on Napoleon's abolition of intolerant institutions, *e. g.*

¹ December 28, 1812.

² October 13, 1809.

³ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 268.

the Inquisition, and contrasted it with British bigotry : ¹ but we do not hear anything of the Civil Code. Above all, the idea of "a great machine" predominates—on this the *Edinburgh Review* lays especial stress—and typical of this machine is the Conscription, which this periodical does not consider unpopular, owing to love of national glory and the perversion wrought by militarism : with this Vetus in *The Times*, J. Scott in his *Visit to Paris*, and H. Scott in his History agree. The former ² writes that it did not press hard on the lower classes, and offered to the lowest the prospect of a marshal's baton.

Bonaparte's use of his Senate is remarked on by the *Edinburgh Review*,³ which declares that he keeps it in order to bring the cause of liberty into contempt by showing off the servility of these quondam vindicators of liberty ; and later,⁴ it maintains that "the Senate and the legislative body actually answered all the ends of their establishment by facilitating the execution of the imperial will, and disguising . . . the naked oppression of the Government." On the other hand, H. Scott speaks of the service rendered to France by Bonaparte in bringing into existence the legislative bodies, "which are now (1814) to be the depositaries of liberty. He indeed controlled them by far too much. The turbulent

¹ Melancthon, in a "Letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland," 1809. But *The Times* (January 9, 1809) says that it is merely meant to appear as a specimen of his reforms, and also to give a colouring to his action.

² *The Times*, August 13, 1813.

³ January 1809 : Vol. XIII. p. 454.

⁴ April 1814, Vol. XXIII. p. 20.

and precarious times in which he lived may furnish candour with some apology even for that.”¹ But the general view was that Bonaparte utterly demoralized the French people. J. Scott² lays especial stress on this: “He substituted destructive errors which are adapted to the complexion of the times for those which were decaying of themselves: he made all talent subordinate to his own uses, thus debasing art and military virtue: he addressed himself to the besetting faults of the French people, thus making them tenfold worse: thus he raised his power on the frailties of the French people, especially their vanity.”

The connection of Napoleon with the land from which his race sprung has always excited curiosity, and we have several references to the Empire in Italy from contemporary English writers. One of the earliest of these notices comes from Major-General E. Paget,³ who frankly admits that the Government at Milazzo is so bad, “that if Satan himself had appeared as a deliverer instead of Bonaparte, there would have been no wonder at his being received with open arms;” and the idea that the old governments of Italy were so thoroughly bad that even that of Napoleon was better seems pretty generally prevalent. In fact Englishmen grudgingly allowed that Bonaparte’s sway had benefited Italy. Thus in Castlereagh’s Despatches for 1810⁴ we find an anonymous memorandum on Sicily actually

¹ Cp. Chapter V. section iii. p. 252.

² *Visit to Paris*, Introduction, p. vi.

³ *Paget Papers*, April 29, 1807: Vol. II. p. 289.

⁴ Vol. VIII. p. 232.

saying, "The French have done much for the regeneration of Italy. They have destroyed the prejudices of the small States of upper Italy by uniting them; they have done away with the Pope; they have made them soldiers." The writer then goes on to point out that the holder of regenerate Sicily is master alike of the east of Europe and the north of Africa—quite a Napoleonic idea.

Our next witness is Hobhouse, writing from Paris in 1815.¹ Speaking of the fact that Italy, after a brief moment of self-congratulation, deplored Napoleon's fall, he gives the reason. "She had felt but little the weight of the iron crown, and recognized in her subjection to France rather a union of interests and a claim to protection than any of the conditions of servitude," and goes on to say that as she had a national court, army, administration, and (practically) king,² she was in a fair way to acquire the characteristics of national independence, and in the end would probably have secured "that finishing excellence itself."

Romilly travelled in Italy in September 1815, and gives a testimony³ equally handsome and much more valuable, as he was no worshipper of Napoleon as Hobhouse was. He admired the road over the Simplon—as also did Horner, whose views in most respects are a counterpart of his—and the architectural achievements in Italy: "At Milan almost everything that is grand and splendid in the external appearance of the city is connected with the name of Bonaparte. . . . It is much less, however, in public

¹ Letter XVI. Vol. I. p. 360.

² *i. e.* Eugene.

³ *Memoirs*, September 1815: Vol. III. p. 205.

edifices and monuments than in the manners and character of the inhabitants that the French domination seems to have had a very beneficial result on Italy. . . . Assassinations had almost ceased under the French Government, but since the restoration of the ancient order of things . . . they have become as frequent as ever. Dreadful indeed are the evils which Bonaparte has brought on the human race; but he must be strangely prejudiced who can deny that, in Italy at least, against those evils are to be set out some very considerable benefits of which he is the author." Possibly Englishmen were all the more prepared to praise the French domination in Italy because of their just detestation of the Court of Naples, "a brothel at Palermo," as Lord Ellenborough¹ called it. Finally, the idea of a united Italy appears frequently, above all, as we have noticed, in Wordsworth. This conception was itself due more to the levelling Napoleonic Empire than to anything else.

One or two further points about the Empire were remarked on by Englishmen. The *Quarterly*² comments on Bonaparte's influence over the press. Bonaparte, it declares, has paid the most unequivocal homage to its power. "He first courted it as an ally: he has since pursued it as an enemy: he now holds it as a captive." This enslavement of the press is even more remarkable than his victories. Later it describes³—and justly describes—the *Moniteur* as one of Bonaparte's most powerful

¹ Holland, *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, Vol. II. p. 96.

² October 1811: Vol. VI. p. 235.

³ January 1815: Vol. XII. p. 467.

engines to increase the slavery of the French or to rouse them against his enemies. The *Edinburgh*, for once in agreement with the *Quarterly*, declares in 1809,¹ "He now rests his power on the avowed power of the sword. No asylum, no freedom of the press anywhere on the Continent." J. Scott went even further. He declared that it was Bonaparte's aim to degrade literature and exalt science, for in history, legislation, criticism and poetry he saw the worst enemies of his despotism: "He had a degraded religion and a slavish priesthood at his command; but he seems to have dreaded the voice of history."²

From the completeness of Bonaparte's control over the press, it was easy to deduce that the press itself was mendacious. Wellington, in a letter to Croker,³ says that "the whole system in France is falsehood and fraud, and not a word of truth is ever published in France, particularly respecting the affairs in the Peninsula;" and in January 1814⁴ the *Quarterly* comments on "the organized system of fraud and public deceit upon which the throne of Bonaparte is built. The present Government of France is the true reign of Terror;" and adds that Bonaparte is "the sun of the system of espionage."

Another notable feature observed by *The Times*⁵ in order to point the moral to England, is that Bonaparte's Empire is indebted to youthful talents for

¹ January 1809: Vol. XIII. p. 456.

² *Visit to Paris*, p. 231.

³ *Croker Papers*, Vol. I. p. 40: December 20, 1810

⁴ January 1814: Vol. X. p. 488.

⁵ April 27, 1809.

its enormous success.¹ It concludes that we need youthful daring to defeat "the most daring enemy we ever had to encounter."

In January 1809² the *Edinburgh* prophesies the conquest of the whole Continent, and is naturally led to compare France with Rome—Rome "with the vices of her decline and the fierceness of her infancy, with her insolent carriage without her healing arts:" and in April 1810³ it brings forward the same idea of one great conquering nation. Arguing that the French Empire is not bound to fall with the life of Bonaparte, it maintains that its greatness, though helped by his genius, is really due to earlier causes, *e. g.* the natural advantages of France. It was only a weak system which prevented her conquering Europe earlier. The idea of conquest is strong in the vain French people (as it was in the Romans); Bonaparte availed himself of this, and so exultation at his glory drowned the murmurs at the Conscription.

Yet the more general feeling in England was the optimistic one: it was voiced by *The Times*, which kept declaring that Bonaparte's universal empire was impossible. It was the dim light which guided Liverpool's perplexed mind. Even in the gloom of 1809 he had hope in the nearer approach of day. It inspired the Marquis of Wellesley to remark on June 24, 1811,⁴ that he hoped that Bonaparte would

¹ This is true enough; in the Jena campaign the average age of the Prussian generals was nearly twice that of the commanders of the French.

² Vol. XIII. p. 456.

³ On the French Government, Vol. XVI. p. 20.

⁴ *Parl. Debates*.

yet answer for his crimes at an earthly tribunal. Finally, the heart of England could not absolutely despair in the years which saw Talavera and Albuera.

Note.—Bonaparte's architectural improvements in Paris receive favourable comment in May 1814 from Francis Horner and the Hon. J. W. Ward (Miss Berry's Journal). The latter describes them as "quite magnificent and in the best possible taste," and also very cheap. France certainly was not ruined by Bonaparte's Government, though the taxes and conscription pressed hard for the best part of the reign. Literature at a low ebb. J. Scott (*Visit to Paris*, p. 171 *sqq.*) reprobates these architectural improvements as mere indications of vainglory, and not of public prosperity, as "signs that the sober and minute machinery of society have been neglected for what is swelling, gigantic and overgrown." He then refers to the bad state of the streets. The *Quarterly* (October 1814) denies that he was a great builder; but "his selfish ambition in restoring the royal palaces rendered a great service to France by obliterating the traces of the Revolution, and bringing back the public mind to sentiments of legitimate and orderly government." Sir Walter Scott (*Paul's Letters*, Vol. II. p. 41) is more favourable: "It cannot be denied that he showed great dexterity in availing himself of that taste for national display which is a leading feature of the French character."

CHAPTER III
THE FALL OF NAPOLEON

THE FALL OF NAPOLEON

THIS is during most of its extent the least valuable of the three periods for enabling one to form an estimate of the idea entertained about Napoleon at the moment. In the first place, people were too much interested and excited by the victories of the war, especially those in the Peninsula, to turn many of their thoughts towards the falling Emperor: if they did, it was only to rejoice at the removal of the shadow from Europe. In the second, his character was now stereotyped as the "Enemy of mankind," and apparently nothing that he did was able to alter this impression; in fact his conduct seemed to confirm it. Hence at this time we find our authorities discussing the chances of campaigns, expressing their hopes and doubts, but not turning their attention much either to the Emperor or his Empire in decay. In fact the period from 1812-14 resembles that from 1805-7 in this respect, that in each people looked on as spectators of action, whereas in 1801-3 and 1807-12 they contemplated a state: and state rather than action was favourable to a scrutiny of Napoleon. In this period, above all, we feel the want of a more sympathetic attitude towards the enemy. The obloquy increasing with Napoleon's defeats, thrown upon him as man, as statesman and even finally as general, does not redound to the credit or generosity of the country.

It is curious to find Canning,¹ a deadly and usually pretty vociferous antagonist of Napoleon, for a moment adopting a rather more magnanimous and indeed rational tone than the rest. "We must not expect from our enemy that he should sacrifice to us his honour and interest, to him equally dear . . . we must expect from him a renewed and vehement struggle." From 1812-14, however, the defenders of Napoleon were silenced. *The Times* narrates with glee how certain persons who spoke of the "respect due to the Ruler of France" were hooted through the streets.

In 1815, however, it is refreshing to come across Hobhouse's Letters from Paris. His intelligent and laudatory remarks on Napoleon make us forgive what, it must be confessed, was a distinct lack of patriotism; but his is as a voice crying in the Wilderness. Lord Holland's Reminiscences, of course, give a more impartial and a more moderate view, but they were not written till 1821. Apart from these two and stray references from Grey and Whitbread, there is hardly a single generous or reasonably impartial remark about Napoleon to be found in these years.

After Waterloo, of course, Napoleon came into personal contact with Englishmen, whom he impressed favourably, and apparently when the danger from his power was over, men were able to analyze his character and his acts with greater equanimity.

¹ *Speeches*, November 17, 1813.

SECTION I

THE TWO CAMPAIGNS, 1812, 1813

COMMENTS on the Russian campaign are numerous enough, but on the whole disappointing, considering the tremendous character of the catastrophe and the no less vast change in the fortunes of Napoleon and Europe which it entailed. Before the campaign, odds would have been laid on Napoleon even in England, and still more on the Continent. The year before, we find Croker¹ uneasy lest Russia break with France too soon, for “a feverish and jealous peace I think more useful than unconnected and uncombined war. Such a peace might end in a general war, such a war would but end in a general subjection”; and though the defeats of the French in Spain—until Salamanca none decisive, and all partaking of the character of mere repulses—gave hope to certain staunch spirits, *e. g.* Sir Walter Scott, yet the war was regarded with apprehension, especially when the strength of the French army became known. We find, however, Mr. Pellew writing to Sidmouth just after the declaration of war: “Twenty years ago public opinion overturned the world. The period is very fast approaching when this same weapon will work the peace of mankind and the

¹ *Croker Papers*, June 1811: Vol. I. p. 31.

downfall of a tyrant. . . . The happiness of nations and the welfare of mankind have been forgotten. But I think the time is come when the people, awakened from their sleep, will be roused to revenge their insults and their wrongs,"—a true prophecy to be fulfilled at once by the sullen enthusiasm of the people who felt their Holy Russia insulted, and whose vengeance for their wrongs was to be so tremendous.

In the first part of the campaign pessimism prevails. Smolensk, Borodino, the capture of Moscow, all seemed to prove that Bonaparte was invincible. *The Times* of course does its best, almost going so far as to claim Borodino as a Russian victory; but by October all seemed lost. Lord Hutchinson,¹ an admirer of Napoleon, said that the Russians were hopelessly defeated; Captain Milne² feared that the French influence at St. Petersburg would induce Alexander to make peace. In a month all was changed. The news of Bonaparte's evacuation of Moscow began to leak out, and the peal of triumph with which it was greeted rose louder and louder, as more and more authentic and horrible accounts of the retreat came to hand. *The Times* is in its element, compares him first to Xerxes, and then, with curious lack of relevance, to Julian, dilates on his error in delaying his retreat, maintains that the French army must now detest him, and looks forward to his utter and immediate ruin. Sir Walter Scott³ is also in raptures. "If Bonaparte's

¹ *Creevey Papers*, October 11, 1812 : Vol. I. p. 170.

² Milne, *Home Papers*, October 15, 1812, p. 156.

³ *Letters*, November 29, 1812 : Vol. III. p. 20.

devil does not help him, he is in a poor way." And in him as in many others a feeling of gratitude to the Russians gives birth to a strong admiration for them. He congratulates Ellis¹ on "the renovated vigour of your fine old friends the Russians. By the Lord, sir, it is most famous, this campaign of theirs . . . I had no hope in my time of seeing the dry bones of the Continent so warm with life again." He looks forward to the effect of this campaign in Germany, where, he thinks, "Boney" will hardly trust himself, now that he must see that his grand exertions can be foiled by "protracted, stubborn, unaccommodating resistance"; he then adds with characteristic patriotism: "All laud to Lord Wellington, who first taught this lesson," an idea which is paralleled in the debate on opening the Session,² where members spoke of "the spark of resistance lighted in Spain spreading over Europe to the furthest North," of the "deadly shock" received by Bonaparte's military despotism, of the debt that Russia owed to Spain. *The Times* also attributes³ the overthrow to the national resistance of Russia. The "Corsican attorney's son," it says, should have known the strength of national feeling in Russia, but, owing to his "despicable ignorance of the human heart," he has been surprised by it. Now "the modern Charlemagne or Charlatan" is certain to be ruined unless we make peace: he is no longer the "hero of the age." In fact we find the overwhelming nature of the cata-

¹ *Letters*, January 1813: Vol. III. p. 36.

² *Parl. Debates*, November 30, 1812.

³ December 29, 1812.

strophe exaggerated rather than minimized. No one seems to suspect the forces of resistance still at Bonaparte's disposal, or the ruthless resource and energy of his mind shown in his immediate recruitment of a new army. Further, in those days of slow mails and uncertain information, it was impossible to form a sound judgment exactly contemporaneously with the occurrences. Hence criticism of the Moscow campaign is more in touch with the facts a year or two later; though Castlereagh,¹ as early as November 30, 1812, appreciated the fact that "Bonaparte's wars were not as heretofore, wars productive of means to recruit his resources, augment his forces, and from his conquests reap the sinews of extended conquests." A writer in *The Times*, the intelligent, though of course prejudiced, critic with the *nom de plume* of "Vetus,"² gives³ Bonaparte's object in making war with Russia. It was not to stop the Turkish war or to add territory, or only to detach Poland, for if Bonaparte had only shown self-restraint after establishing himself in Poland, he might have permanently occupied that country. But that was not enough; he desired the Empire of the World, the Frenchman's beau-ideal. England being the chief obstacle "to an end so holy," the Russian campaign was aimed against England. This is very largely true: to repair the gap in the Continental System was one of Napoleon's main objects in

¹ *Parl. Debates*.

² "Vetus" was the *nom de plume* of Edward Sterling. It is a curious one, as Sterling was barely forty years of age in 1813.

³ May 24, 1813.

attacking Russia. A few days later the same writer picks out two great features of Napoleon's genius shown in this campaign—first, his audacity in conceiving it; secondly, his subtlety in the use of his instruments: as an instance of the latter he gives his employment of German mercenaries so as to prevent outbreaks in Germany. His idea was to make each nation the instrument of another's subjection. Hence, the greater the butchery in the Russian war the better. We have seen a similar notion in 1809¹—*The Times* declared that at Eckmühl the Rhinelanders were put in the forefront of the battle for the same reason.

Both the *Edinburgh* (February 1815) and the *Quarterly* (January 1815) contain reviews dealing with this campaign. The former largely consists of quotations, and we find little in it of use: it emphasizes the tremendous power of his army: the latter attributes Bonaparte's "total want of military skill during his stay in Moscow" to misconceptions of the ability of Kutusoff, whom he beat at Austerlitz, and of Russian patriotism, and also to faulty maps of Russia.

The verdict of a later time is probably contained in Lord Holland's remark,² that Napoleon "risked the consequences of a great military fault on a political speculation." He was right in considering Alexander infirm, but this infirmity told against him. Cobbett considers that Napoleon over-reached himself: if his "cormorant ambition had not induced him to aim at Moscow," he would have forced

¹ See *supra*, Chap. II. section iii. p. 101.

² *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 167.

Alexander to submit. Lord Brougham's view, though differently expressed to that of Holland, in reality is based on the same idea: "Nor let us forget," he writes,¹ "that the grand error of his whole career, the expedition to Moscow, was a political error only."

A curious difference of opinion is to be found with regard to the burning of Moscow, reflecting the conflicting evidence of the fact, and the various prejudices of the writers. "Horrible act of French incendiarism" (the general view). "Bonaparte was anxious to preserve Moscow as he was to preserve other cities he had conquered" (Whitbread).² "The noble Russian who burned Moscow" (Sir Walter Scott).³ "The conduct of Alexander in burning Moscow was atrocious" (Cobbett). Holland with his usual impartiality says it was done by robbers.

1813 was an *annus mirabilis*. Vittoria, Leipsic, the expulsion of the French from Germany and Spain, the imminent invasion of France, filled Whig and Tory alike with delight, and occasioned a mood of unreflective patriotism. The spirit of the country was that of an excited mob pulling down an obnoxious statue, and it is too much to expect of members of the mob that during the operation they should discuss the artistic qualities of the statue. 1813 was above all a year of pulling and hauling. 1814 saw the mob justifying themselves.

The newspapers encouraged the mob by continual

¹ *Statesmen*, Vol. III. p. 262.

² *Parl. Debates*, November 30, 1812.

³ *Letters*, December 10, 1812: Vol. III. p. 21.

shouts of "He's falling, he's falling": and this is the main function of *The Times* during 1813. It sets itself out to belittle Napoleon's victories and emphasize his defeats: shows a distinct tendency to claim Lutzen and Bautzen as French defeats; maintains¹ that Dresden was "not a day illumined by the sun of Austerlitz"; declares that Austerlitz itself and Wagram fade into insignificance before Leipsic; speaks of the "heroic exploits of Wrede" at Hanau;² expatiates on the poor quality of Bonaparte's conscript army; declares that the struggle is one to the death, now comparing Bonaparte³ to the snake which attacked a husbandman (Europe) who had cherished it, and who had either to kill the snake or be killed himself, now to a robber⁴ defending his booty. It praises Bernadotte at the expense of his late master, and, emboldened by Leipsic,⁵ calls for an invasion of France. Earlier in the year⁶ "Vetus" had deprecated such a step, since it would induce Frenchmen to rally round the usurper, once the sanctity of French soil was violated; but now *The Times* waives this objection aside on the ground that people no longer think that the cause of France and of freedom are the same. "The people of France are at present for all moral and political purposes a nonentity." Finally, it encourages the iconoclasts by calling their attention to the fact that the statue after

¹ September 7, 1813.

² November 24. Contrast Napoleon's comment on this battle in which he won an undoubted victory: "I made Wrede a count but could never make him a general."

³ September 24.

⁴ October 6.

⁵ December 4.

⁶ July 20.

all is not a great one; sneers¹ at Napoleon's statecraft: "He aimed at a political greatness for which nature never fitted him;" "He has for ever disgraced himself as a general because he would be a statesman"; and at his generalship² at Leipsic: "Every one asks, 'Is this the great general that made Europe tremble?'" *The Times* would never admit Napoleon to be anything but an impostor.

We get much the same impression from more intelligent observers. The weighty, passionless utterances of Castlereagh, the boisterous cheering of Scott, the feeble violence of Sidmouth, are all variations on the same theme. From first to last optimism is the keynote. In January 1813 Castlereagh³ reviews the situation. Bonaparte is still playing the game of impression, but is likely to make peace on the mediation of Austria. Our present policy is to unite Russia with the Germanic powers, especially as the spirit of York's Prussian corps is likely to diffuse itself. The capitulation of York was felt to be a deadly blow to Bonaparte. Whigs, like Horner, hail with delight the strong national spirit of North Germany. "The Whigs," he writes on October 25, 1813, "ought to support the war system upon the very same principle which prompted them to stigmatize it as unjust in 1793, and as premature in 1803."⁴ Sidmouth⁵ believes that the Russian war has given an impulse

¹ December 16.

² November 22.

³ *Despatches*, etc., Vol. VIII. pp. 302 *sqq.*

⁴ *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 158.

⁵ *Life and Letters*, March 17, 1813 (to Pellevé): Vol. III. p. 97.

to countries in a hopeless state, and Southey¹ thinks that this is "the fourth Act of the Corsican," and that "the catastrophe of the bloody drama is near." Lutzen and Bautzen gave rather a shock to this optimism; but then came the Armistice, and all eyes were turned on Austria. Her possible defalcation from "the cause of liberty" filled the hysterical portion of the community with fury. Southey² had previously hoped that "this vile power"—poor Austria who had fought four wars against Bonaparte within sixteen years!—would share Bonaparte's overthrow, "for it has cursed Germany too long"—a sentiment which during the Armistice was echoed by *The Times*:³ at one point even the cool intellect of Castlereagh despaired of winning over the South German power. Then, however, came the rupture; and no praise could be high enough for Austria and for the noble sacrifice of personal ties to duty on the part of the Emperor Francis. Nevertheless it did not escape observation, both then and afterwards, that Napoleon had only himself to blame. Thus in July⁴ Thornton feared that his acceptance of more moderate terms would prevent the co-operation of Austria: and even *The Times*⁵ notices this, when it declares that

¹ *Letters*, January 25, 1813; Vol. IV. p. 14.

² *Ibid.*

³ Austria was not popular in England. She was always blamed for her "want of spirit," most unjustly. Her sullen tenacity never got any credit. "Austria detestable!" writes Addington in 1803; and Holland (*Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*) says that duplicity is "the weapon most congenial to the taste and best adapted to the faculties of that cowardly and ignorant Court."

⁴ *Despatches*, etc., July 12: Vol. VIII. p. 416.

⁵ August 21, 1813.

Bonaparte's vanity does not allow him to suspect the hostility he has aroused: by moderate concessions he might have conciliated Austria. On September 1 Castlereagh¹ writes, "Metternich seems to have out-manceuvred him." Napoleon's admirers are of a like opinion. Hobhouse² in 1815 is persuaded that a "little better management with Mr. de (*sic*) Metternich" would have secured at least the neutrality of Austria:³ and Lord Holland⁴ sums up the situation thus: "Napoleon's first efforts were successful, but he, like his adversaries, lost the opportunity of acting with moderation and magnanimity in the hour of prosperity."

Finally, after a series of French defeats came Leipsic. Most of the comments are purely military and express surprise at Napoleon's errors. The *Edinburgh*⁵ describes it as decisive: "The chains of the Continent were broken at Leipsic," and the verdict of H. Scott, a remarkably cool and well-balanced one, is as follows:⁶ The unexpected desertion by his allies "Bonaparte supported with uncommon fortitude, and in the midst of unexampled difficulties he extricated himself in such a manner as no other man could have done but himself." Yet during this period his presence of mind seems momentarily to have deserted him. Never did he commit so many blunders. "Perpetual success had so far blinded his intellectual

¹ *Despatches*, 3rd Series, Vol. I. p. 46.

² *Letter XIII*, p. 316.

³ Metternich, he adds, was gratuitously insulted by Napoleon.

⁴ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 181.

⁵ April 1814: Vol. XXIII. p. 13.

⁶ *History*, p. 217.

vision as to make him believe his schemes could not fail, so he made no provision for failure." At the time contrasts ¹ were drawn between the Allies of the past with their "heartless armies," "corrupt generals" and "blind sovereigns," and the victorious Allies of Leipsic; between Bonaparte's army of the past ² and that of the present,—“men carried bound in chains to fight,”—and between Bonaparte and Moreau,³ who had lived for the liberties of France and died for the liberties of Europe." Finally, to conclude this year of triumph with the right note, we may give as characteristic the pæans of rejoicing raised by Sir Walter Scott in his *Letters*.⁴ "What an awakening of dry bones seems to be taking place on the Continent: I could as soon have believed in the resurrection of the Romans as of the Prussians. . . . It will certainly be strange enough if that tremendous pitcher which has travelled to so many fountains should at length be broken on the banks of the Saale." "The great work of retribution is now rolling onward to consummation, yet I am not fully satisfied—*pereat iste*. There will be no permanent peace in Europe till Bonaparte sleeps with the tyrants of old." "Bonaparte is that desperate gambler who will not rise while he has a stake left."⁵ . . . I think he will drive things on till the fickle

¹ *Parl. Debates*, November 4, 1813: C. Grant.

² *Ibid.* Lord Compton.

³ *Ibid.* Lord Compton.

⁴ *Letters*, November 6, November 13 and December 10: Vol. III. pp. 89, 101, 103.

⁵ For the simile compare the *Edinburgh Review* for July 1808 on Spain. Bonaparte will not make peace with Spain. "He never treats when he is in the way of being worsted; he is a skilful gamester and leaves his play only when he is winning."

and impatient people over which he rules get tired of him and shake him out of the saddle." "The sword displayed on both frontiers may, like that brandished across the road of Balaam, terrify even irrational and dumb subjection into utterance."

Yet such an idea was too extreme. Napoleon in 1813-14 was not *actively* disliked in France. Save in the south and extreme west there was little Royalist enthusiasm, and Englishmen were too prone to take it for granted that Frenchmen entertained the same idea of Bonaparte as they did. When they got proof to the contrary, the only, but very characteristic, argument that they deduced was that Frenchmen were hopelessly degraded.

SECTION II

THE ABDICATION AND ELBA

AT the beginning of 1814 it was felt that the supreme moment had arrived. Europe had hitherto struggled for emancipation, and had won it. Canning¹ declared that it was now impossible for Bonaparte ever to renew his Empire, as his vassals must have lost confidence in him. Now it was a question of retribution, and indeed of conquest. Hence *The Times*—when at least it is not engaged in (literally!) crying out for Bonaparte's blood—plays an important rôle this year as the avowed apostle of reaction and Bourbonism. It frankly confesses² its motive: "We wish to see the Bourbons back; we wish to have to fight with gentlemen and men of honour, not with vagabonds." With naïve inconsistency, after declaring³ that it would never do to force a sovereign on France, it adds, "If the French prefer a Bonaparte . . . let them take him on the terms which such folly deserves." It preaches reaction as the *summum bonum*:⁴ "What we now want is to return not only to old limits and formal balances of power, but to old ways of thinking, to names and to things precious to our ancestors, to the laws and customs

¹ *Speeches*, November 17, 1813: Vol. III. p. 429.

² January 11, 1814. ³ January 31. ⁴ February 23.

by which Europe was civilized;”¹ and again:² “Our rallying cry should be ‘Europe as it was in 1788.’” It utters a howl of hatred and derision³ against a “ministerial print” which declared that Bonaparte raised France in the estimation of the world, and that the French landholders were deservedly humbled at the Revolution: it welcomes “the return to those safe and practicable principles of policy which prior to the fatal Revolution had rendered France the envy and pride of the world.” Scott and Canning had uttered these sentiments earlier. The former, in a private letter on December 10, 1813, plagiarizes the simile of Canning’s speech of July 7, 1813, which runs: “The mighty deluge by which the Continent had been overwhelmed began to subside. The limits of nations were again visible, and the spires and turrets of ancient establishments began to reappear above the subsiding wave.” In 1814 the reactionaries wished the tide to be swept back not only over Europe, but also over France, so as to allow Bourbonism to reappear. Not that the desire to see the Bourbons once again on the throne of France was at all unanimous in England. Southey,⁴ though calling for war *à outrance* with Bonaparte—“No peace while he remains alive”—still detests the Bourbons. “It was the work of the Revolution to destroy them.” It shows how

¹ It also remarks that to ask whether the cause of liberty and order was promoted in England by the Restoration, is “the question of a rank Jacobin,” though Cromwell was merely “a bold, bad man, not to be compared with Bonaparte, a true demon.”

² March 7.

³ March 11.

⁴ *Letters*, passim, 1813-14.

intense was the detestation of Bonaparte in England that all parties clamoured for his overthrow, even those who feared that a Bourbon reaction would ensue.

At the outset of the campaign of 1814 every one looked upon Bonaparte as doomed, as the condemned gladiator sullenly entering his last arena amid hostile silence.¹ The only fear in England was of an unsatisfactory peace. Hence we find rejoicing at the entry of the Allies into France: "Bonaparte must now fight at the gates of Paris."² So far did people regard the war as a foregone conclusion that the early battles, Brienne and La Rothière, did not excite much attention. French victories like the former were disbelieved, French defeats like the latter taken as a matter of course. In fact the tendency to underrate Bonaparte not only as statesman, but now even as general, had gone as far as the previous tendency to consider him irresistible. People seem to have expected a military promenade; *e. g.* Fitzwilliam³ comments on the lack of national spirit in France, "disappointing in a nation so famous for energy," and with regard to its head, "Bonaparte, he says, sinks in adversity, and we shall see him die a mean dastard"; Sidmouth replies in a like strain. Napoleon's admirers despaired. When Hobhouse told Knight that he thought the Allies would get to Paris, the latter said he would keep up his spirits and go to America.⁴

¹ *The Times*, January 31.

² *Milne-Hume Papers*, January 25, p. 160.

³ *Life and Letters of Addington*, Vol. III. p. 115.

⁴ *Diary in Recollections of a Long Life*, February 10: Vol. I. p. 84.

Napoleon's great series of victories on the Marne startled this complacency, and gave hope to his admirers. "Napoleon¹ has apparently beaten the Allies further from Paris. Holland House is in delight, and my friend Knight assumes the tone of moderation which he thinks it becomes a successful person to put on." And even *The Times*, suspicious of Austria, as the deadly enemies of Napoleon mostly were, says that if Schwartzemberg has not taken advantage of the opening presented to him, "the cause of civilization, of justice, of liberty, of humanity, may have suffered an irreparable blow;" it characteristically denies Napoleon credit for the victories, attributing them to his "desperate contempt for chances." Napoleon's subsequent victories on the Seine seem to have passed unnoticed. Nevertheless Blucher's victory at Laon turned the scale, and enabled Englishmen to resume the attitude of contempt towards Bonaparte which had received a rude though momentary interruption—yet later in the year the *Quarterly*² ventures to praise his military movements, especially his operations against the Allied rear. The delighted outbursts which hailed the fall of Paris, "the proud city, the city of philosophy,"³ were repeated three days afterwards on the news of the abdication, news which at first people could hardly believe.⁴ *The Times* does full justice to the occasion. "The foul and

¹ Diary in *Recollections of a Long Life*, February 22 : Vol. I. p. 87.

² October 1814, *Memoirs of Bonaparte's Deposition*.

³ *The Times*, April 6.

⁴ Miss Berry's *Journals and Correspondence*, Vol. III. p. 10.

ghastly features of the grim idol," "the delusive meteor," "the most infamous of cowards," "loathsome hypocrisy," are samples of its judicious comments. On the whole we may say that delighted amazement and contempt for the fallen were the leading characteristics of English feeling at the abdication. Carlyle ¹ (*ætat* 19) in one of his Early Letters remarks on the field for moral reflection now that "Napoleon the mighty has GONE TO POT!!!" This is quite typical of the ordinary English view; as also are the remarks of Sir Walter Scott: ² "But this is a poor devil and cannot play the tyrant so rarely as Bottom the weaver proposed to do." *The Times* (*passim*) lays stress on his cowardice.³ The *Edinburgh Review* ⁴ is too sane to entertain this idea, but remarks that the Allies, "by their generous forbearance and singular moderation, not only put their adversary wrong in the eyes of all Europe, but made him appear little and ferocious by comparison."

There were a few exceptions. I suppose Knight must have been one, Lord Holland another; and Hobhouse certainly was a third; for we find him writing in his Diary: ⁵ "There must in this ⁶ also be something to awaken sensations very different

¹ *Early Letters*, April 30, 1814: Vol. I. p. 3.

² *Letters*, June 17: Vol. III. p. 118.

³ Contrast Sir Charles Stewart. In his account of La Rothière, he writes: "Napoleon (*sic*) seems to have set his life on a die, as he exposed himself everywhere and had a horse shot under him." (Castlereagh, *Despatches*, 3rd Series, Vol. I. p. 229.)

⁴ April 1814: Vol. XXIII. p. 11.

⁵ Diary in *Recollections of a Long Life*, April 10: Vol. I. p. 104.

⁶ *i. e.* his farewell address to the army.

from exultation at the fall of this great man." Further, H. Scott, though hardly a friend to Napoleon, says that "we cannot easily forget" his last words to the Old Guard.

What seems to have struck observers most is that Napoleon brought his ruin upon himself, above all by his rejection of the Allied terms at Chatillon. Had it not been, says Sir Walter Scott,¹ for "the preternatural presumption and hardness of heart displayed by the arch-enemy of mankind," we should only have had a hollow truce with France; but, "so devoutly did the French worship the devil for his burning throne," that nothing short of his rejection of a fair peace would have made them resist him. Holland² confesses that Chatillon did not raise his opinion of Napoleon, ascribing to him an intention not only of violating faith with the confederates, but, in case of need, of disavowing and sacrificing the honour of the negotiator. And others of his friends joined in the cry that towards the end of the reign he was infatuated, though they do not thank Providence for it as Scott does. Earlier in the year Hobhouse³ had described the Frankfort Conference as "an effort to awaken Napoleon from his dream," and Whitbread⁴ said that the negotiations at Chatillon failed only through Bonaparte's

¹ *Letters*, April 30, 1814: Vol. III. p. 115. Lord Wellesley put much the same idea into more reasonable words when he said that Napoleon's keenness of appetite was so feverish in all that touched his ambition even in the most trifling things, that he must plunge into desperate reverses.

² *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 296.

³ *Recollections of a Long Life*, Vol. I. p. 75.

⁴ *Parl. Debates*, June 29, 1814.

"folly or madness." His private view is found in a letter to T. Sheridan.¹ "The great example set of the Fidelity of all his generals,² and of the armies they commanded up to the very moment that he himself gave up all for lost and opened his own eyes to the consequences of his desperate folly, must surely have its effect on the world and redeems many of the Treacheries men have committed against their leaders. I confess it pleases me beyond measure." The *Quarterly*³ agrees that he was mad, though not more so after 1812 than before; but "what was genius and glory in success was folly and madness in defeat." Nevertheless it indirectly defends his sanity by saying that his reason for not making peace was the fact that his throne was founded on prestige. But it was to the Whig mind above all that this idea of infatuation especially appealed, because it showed the weakness of despotism; to the pious mind it seemed to display the hand of Heaven punishing the despot. Infatuation is also hinted at in the *Edinburgh Review*,⁴ which declares that, had he known when to stop in his aggression, his "terrific sovereignty might have been permanent."

To most Englishmen the victory certainly appeared the triumph of good over evil. There is, I think, no doubt whatever that they were perfectly

¹ *Creevey Papers*, April 10, 1814: Vol. I. p. 191.

² Contrast Holland (*Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*), who attributes Napoleon's fall to Marmont, "whose elevation to command by the favour or caprice of Napoleon was destined to be fatal to the interests of that extraordinary man."

³ October 1814: Vol. XII. p. 244.

⁴ April 1814: Vol. XXIII. p. 6.

sincere in believing Bonaparte to be at any rate the foe to civilization and humanity, if not Anti-Christ or the Spirit of the Devil, as the more superstitious and credulous imagined.

Their attitude is thoroughly elucidated in a fine passage from Canning.¹ This statesman summarizes Napoleonic policy and ideas as they presented themselves to most Englishmen, thus : America " would trace him by the desolation of Empires and the dismemberment of States ; she would see him pursuing his course over the ruins of men and things ; slavery to the people, and destruction to commerce, hostility to literature, to light and life were the principles on which he acted. His object was to extinguish literature, and to confound allegiance—to darken as well as to enslave—to roll back the tide of civilization, to barbarize as well as to desolate mankind." On the other side he draws a picture of Great Britain, " the deliverer of Europe," trying " to raise the fallen and support the falling." It was so delightful for Englishmen to look back on this noble struggle, that they may fairly be excused for not attempting to look on the other side of the question. To have denied that Napoleon deserved downfall would have belittled their own achievement.

Another side of the same attitude is emphasized by the *Edinburgh Review*,² which lays stress not on the character of Napoleon's sway, but on the attempted universality of it. The triumph of England was the triumph of State individualism as against State unity ; and State individualism, the national-

¹ *Speeches*, November 17, 1813 : Vol. III. p. 435.

² April 1814 : Vol. XXIII. p. 4.

ism preached, lauded and magnified as a force by Wordsworth, was a Whig, or rather Liberal doctrine in which Tories like Canning shared. We have only to remember the latter's share in the liberation of Greece. Hence the moral drawn by the *Edinburgh Review*¹ is the "utter impracticability of any scheme of universal domination" in the face of Europe united; for State individualism does not preclude union to prevent State unity; and a further moral is the impressive lesson read to ambition, for Bonaparte "had done more—acquired more—and possessed more as to actual power, influence and authority than any individual that ever figured on the scene of European history." The fact that the victory of Nationalism was won over the Revolution is emphasized by Canning in his Liverpool speech:² Bonaparte has learnt "that the first consideration suggested to the inhabitant of any country is not whether the political constitution of the State be faultless or not, but whether his home, his altar, his sovereign are to be violated." The opposite idea facilitated the early successes of France.

"The blank like that left by a launched ship, caused by Bonaparte's fall, showed how great was his influence," writes Sir Walter Scott on June 17:³ and we feel, when we look at the leading articles of *The Times*, that a great, if rather painful, interest had gone out of people's lives. For, once at Elba, Napoleon was soon forgotten. Cooke remarked to

¹ April 1814: Vol. XXIII. p. 4.

² June 10, 1814: Vol. VI. p. 336.

³ *Letters*, June 17, 1814: Vol. III. 118.

Neil Campbell, whom he met in February 1815: "When you return to Elba, you may tell Bonaparte that he is quite forgotten in Europe: no one thinks of him now."¹ Elba could not excite very great interest. The general impression about this island was that it was not a desirable place for him; and this for various reasons. Those who would like to have seen him tried or even hanged as "the murderer of Captain Wright," were disappointed. Scott² grudges him Elba, for he has never heard of one disinterested good action of his; and says that were he a son of Palm or Hofer, he would be tempted to take a long shot at him in his retreat to Elba. Other less embittered observers turned more attention to the danger of allowing him to stay at Elba. As early as April 7, 1814, Sir Charles Stewart foresaw the peril. The *Edinburgh*³ hardly puts it too strongly when it roundly declares that, "if the globe had been searched for that residence in which Napoleon was most dangerous to France, all sagacious searchers must have pointed to Elba," and dilates on the close connection of that island with Italy, and the ease of sending communications through the Alps to France. The question was brought up in Parliament after Napoleon's escape; and Ministers had a very bad time of it. Lord Liverpool in defence contended that, wherever Napoleon had been, not being subject to personal restraint, he could have carried on his intrigues and effected his escape. Yet Sir Neil

¹ *Diary on Elba*, p. 362.

² *Letters*, June 17: Vol. III. p. 118.

³ February 1815: Vol. XXIV. p. 508.

Campbell said that if money had been plentifully supplied him, so as to enable him to carry out his schemes of improvement in Elba, and to keep up the semblance of a Court, "such as his vanity¹ might consider suitable," he might have been content to pass the remainder of his days in tranquillity.

It is always interesting to trace the influence of preconceived ideas upon personal impressions and the reaction of the impressions on the ideas. Thus, as we have seen, Whitworth's preconceived ideas about the French Revolution coloured his personal impressions of Napoleon; and we have seen how strong an influence the latter had upon the general English view of Napoleon. Similarly, English ideas were modified by the impressions of Campbell, Ussher, and, if we may believe Hobhouse,² the midshipman of the *Undaunted*, who said: "Boney was so good-humoured and laughed and talked and was so agreeable; but the world has been under a great mistake in thinking him a clever man; he was just like anybody else." Captain Ussher,³ who conducted him to Elba, gives us an account of the voyage. His attitude towards Napoleon may best be given in his own words. When he first met the

¹ The *Quarterly* laughs at the "ridiculous attention with which he adhered to the maintenance of his imperial dignity": the dignity which so strongly excited the ire of most Englishmen.

² *Recollections*, June 12: Vol. I. p. 145.

³ It is a curious fact that with the exceptions of Hudson Lowe and Plampin, the British officers who had to deal with Napoleon were of Scottish descent—Ussher, Maitland, Keith, Cockburn, Malcolm, of the Navy, and Campbell of the Army. Other Scotsmen who came into contact with him were Home, Warden and Hall. Colonel Wilks, however, was a Manxman.

Emperor, "whose manner was dignified, but he appeared to feel his fallen estate," he is "proud to confess that all resentment and uncharitable feeling vanished, and I felt all the delicacy of the situation." He proceeds, "I am desirous to treat him with that generosity to a fallen foe which is ever congenial to the spirit and feelings of Englishmen." The Captain can hardly have had *The Times* before his mind when he wrote this. He thus summarizes his own conduct : "I have endeavoured throughout to execute faithfully and zealously the somewhat difficult mission . . . but at the same time with that deference and respect for the feelings of Napoleon (*sic*) which have appeared to me no less due to his misfortunes than to his exalted station and splendid talents." It may be worthy of remark that each party raised a scandalous cry about this voyage; the friends of Napoleon declared that Ussher incurred disfavour with the Government for his courtesy to Napoleon, while his enemies circulated a story that the ship's crew had refused with disdain a present offered them by the Emperor. Both stories are untrue; in reality both parties separated well pleased with each other: Napoleon was popular with the crew, and he himself liked Ussher.

Among the Englishmen whom Napoleon met at Elba was Lord Ebrington, who has left a memorandum of his visit. He was favourably impressed, as were most Englishmen who met Napoleon. Of course, it may be argued that they were so won over by the pleasantness of his manner that their view of his character may not be as true as that of those

who never had the opportunity of being beguiled. They seem rather to have felt this, unless indeed they did not feel capable of portraying his character, for they usually refrain from expressing themselves as to the latter, and content themselves with externals. Thus Lord Ebrington: "His manner put me quite at my ease almost from the first, and seemed to invite my questions, which he answered upon all subjects without the slightest hesitation, and with a quickness of comprehension and clearness of expression beyond what I ever saw in any other man; nor did he in the whole course of the conversation betray either by his countenance or his manner a single emotion of resentment or regret." Equally pleasant was the impression which he made on Major I. H. Vivian, who "never passed an hour more agreeably," and "felt perfectly at his ease," for "Bonaparte's strain and manner were as familiar and good-natured as possible." Vivian remarks with approbation Bonaparte's conduct in declaring war on the pirates.¹

Colonel Campbell was favourably impressed at first. He was pleased with Napoleon's courtesy at the first interview; and, to quote his own words, entertained "cordial feelings of respect and sympathy" towards him: he can speak about the ingratitude shown him by some of his followers, and of the cordiality and condescension displayed by the Emperor on the voyage. Yet we notice a gradual change. We find him remarking on Napoleon's apparent timidity, his evident inability

¹ The account of this interview is given in full in *Pitt and Napoleon*, pp. 167-82.

to command himself when in conversation : we find him (June 5-12) ¹ saying that "every act of his seemed guided by avarice and a feeling of personal interest with a total disregard to that of others," and the conclusion he arrives at in this period is that "the more he is brought upon a level with others, and the more the opportunities of observing him, the more unfavourably does he appear." ² By September he notes a change ; though the Emperor has lost all habits of study, ³ he occasionally lapses into physical inactivity, and Campbell begins to think he has resigned himself to his retirement ; and yet, earlier (in June), Campbell had written : "Napoleon continues in the same state of perpetual movement, busy with constant schemes, none of which, however, tend to ameliorate the condition of his subjects." ⁴ By February this impression of inactivity has deepened, but Campbell now dislikes him, although he admits that his reception by Napoleon "was always marked with attention and kindness." We find him alluding to "habits of unprincipled rapacity," and describing his charge as "this restless man and his misguided associates." He begins to feel there is something in the air. ⁵

¹ *Diary on Elba*, p. 248. ² *Ibid.* p. 251.

³ *Ibid.* p. 305. ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 248.

⁵ As early as November, he expressed his opinion to Hyde de Neuville, that Napoleon was not sufficiently watched, and was still restless (p. 323).

SECTION III

THE HUNDRED DAYS

ELBA is obscure; but the Hundred Days teem with authorities. The romantic character of Napoleon's undertaking, the anxiety to know what he would do, the struggle in the Netherlands, and the dramatic surrender which ended his career, all produced the utmost curiosity and interest in England. Above all, we have the guidance of Hobhouse's Letters, written from Paris by an avowed admirer of Napoleon; their value is enhanced by the fact that Helen Maria Williams, also in Paris, but bitterly hostile to Napoleon, also wrote a series of letters of directly opposite import. Unfortunately, this authoress was notoriously inaccurate; still she serves as an excellent foil for Hobhouse. To show the discrepancy of their views on Napoleon we may compare their utterances on certain topics :

WILLIAMS:—It was moral cowardice, a strong contrast to their physical courage, which made the French bear Bonaparte's oppression.

The Parisians were in despair; their only hope lay in the victory of the Allies.

HOBHOUSE:—The French tolerated Bonaparte's sway because it secured them equality.

The Allies made it a point of honour for every Frenchman to support him.

Bonaparte's march from Elba was not marvellous; the army was on his side, and he owed his return entirely to it.

It is as wrong to attribute the overthrow of the Bourbons to the Army as to attribute that of James to the army on Hounslow Heath.

When people on the spot differed so widely, it can be imagined how difficult it was for people in England to come to any well-balanced judgment.

Despite Hobhouse's strong predilection for Napoleon, it is hard to call him unpatriotic—in fact, the Waterloo campaign put him into a dilemma, especially as his brother was an officer in Wellington's army and was killed at the great battle. He thus expresses¹ his feelings: "Regarding Napoleon and his warriors as the partisans of the cause of peoples against the conspiracy of kings, whatever may be my regrets that cause has not fallen into hands so pure as to command unqualified support, I cannot help wishing that the French may meet with as much success as will not compromise the military character of my countrymen; but as an Englishman I will not be witness of their triumphs; as a lover of liberty, I would not be a spectator of their reverses." He certainly was no more unpatriotic than Horner, whose sympathy with invaded peoples made him desire "fervently" the success of the French,² much as he disliked Napoleon.

It is hardly necessary to say that he admires and thoroughly approves of the escape from Elba. He

¹ *Recollections*, Diary, June 12.

² *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 258.

justifies¹ it by comparing it with the "honourable violation of his treaty" by the King of Prussia in 1813 to rescue himself from the insignificance of being a mere "king of Königsberg." Napoleon had as much right to be discontented with Elba as Frederick William with Königsberg; and he shows² still stronger approval of it when he compares it with the landing of William of Orange at Torbay. The army at Hounslow Heath was no more representative of the nation than was the French army, and, like the French army, was justified in breaking its oath to its lawful sovereign. Here, it must be confessed, Hobhouse goes too far. The obloquy cast on Ney's treachery by Williams and others was not altogether undeserved. To break a military oath is one thing, to commit a breach of personal confidence another; and Ney was guilty of the latter.

Hobhouse was of course an extreme Liberal. His admiration for Napoleon was not the admiration felt for mere "blood and iron." He saw in the Hundred Days, not a return to the despotic Empire, but the efforts of a people attempting to be independent in the face of eleven hundred thousand bayonets and a detested dynasty. This idea—which was only partially true—invests Napoleon for him with an additional grandeur and importance as the representative of the people—a position which Napoleon had very largely abandoned at his coronation in 1804. "I³ know that I never should have

¹ Letter XIII, Vol. I. pp. 316-17.

² Letter VII, Vol. I. p. 132.

³ Letter III, Vol. I. p. 36.

beheld him with delight in the days of his despotism, and that the principal charm of the spectacle arose from the contemplation of the great peril to be encountered by the one undaunted mortal before my eyes. Let me also say that the persuasion that the right of a great and powerful nation to choose their own sovereign was to be tried in his person, and the remembrance of the wonderful achievement by which he had given an opportunity to decide that choice, contributed in no small degree to augment my satisfaction."

Throughout he regards Napoleon as the chosen representative of the people: not that Napoleon is himself popular, save with the army and in certain districts,¹ but the Bourbons were really *unpopular*, and people felt that, the throne being vacated, Napoleon was the man to be called upon to fill it. "Had there been another pretender, it would have been hazardous to say that Napoleon would have been preferred." The peril to this new system of constitutional government under Napoleon came from war. Hobhouse considers² that the aggressions of the Allies will strengthen the hands of Napoleon, and will make "the friends of freedom trust him with a power necessary perhaps for the salvation of France," whereas, if war does not take place, "the individual independence of Frenchmen is secure." He repeats this idea both in Letter XI and Letter XV. War, he maintains, successful

¹ But J. Scott (*Visit to Paris*, p. 177), a hostile observer, thought that the "largest part of the mass of public opinion in France was in favour of Bonaparte, opposed though such opinion is to honour and principle."

² Letter X, Vol. I. p. 201.

war, is the only thing that may restore Napoleon to his ancient authority; and he refutes the argument that an uncertain peace would be worse than war: "The spirit of liberty is gone forth in France:" so the power of going to war is no longer in the hands of Napoleon. "If the armies of Wellington and Napoleon meet in the field, I should tremble at an English victory. I could receive no congratulation on a triumph in a bad cause, and one which might eventually endanger the individual independence of my countrymen." We may compare the remark of Cobbett in 1834, that Waterloo was more disastrous to England than a hundred defeats, and the words of Napoleon himself to the effect that the English, the lovers of Liberty, would themselves regret Waterloo.

Finally, if Napoleon really loved France, when he guessed that she was on the eve of a Revolution to overthrow an effete dynasty and establish a free government, "he was right in hoping that such a noble project might be accomplished by himself rather than by the united patriotism of rival demagogues."

At times, however, he has doubts. His idealism does not impair the clearness of his vision. He admits ¹ that "not Napoleon only but the French are in their elements in the work of constitutional government," and later, discussing the question of a withdrawal from the throne in face of the outcry of Europe—a step which Miss Williams strongly insists he should have taken—he says that Napoleon has as defence the plea that such a demand would be

¹ Letter X, Vol. I. p. 195.

unjust, "productive neither of honour to himself, nor of utility to France," but goes on to add, that "without this conviction, the preventing motive must be an egotism and selfishness," of which he has been suspected;¹ and in this case he has no sympathy with him. Also he remarks in his Diary² that the fact of Napoleon's being Emperor without an interval must have made people think that their hopes of his having changed are void of foundation.

But the prevailing note is one of admiration. He contrasts Napoleon's "sage and liberal institutions," *e. g.* his abolition of the slave trade, with the "barbarism and ignorance of the ancient dynasties": it is this which makes Castlereagh and other supporters of "the ancient social system" so hostile to Napoleon: they consider that this and his "just and equitable offers to other Powers" are contrivances to recommend usurpation, and to show that "the choice made by a nation of its sovereign may be justified and confirmed by the subsequent efforts of the man so elected to show himself worthy of that choice."³

The Champ de Mai impressed⁴ Hobhouse, though Napoleon looked "very ungainly and squat," and his brothers "as ill as the princes of any legitimate house in Christendom." But "the crowd—the man—surprised me into an unphilosophical admiration."

Waterloo fills him with sympathy for the fallen

¹ Brougham (*Statesmen*, Vol. III. p. 108) accuses him of this.

² *Recollections*, Diary, April 24: Vol. I. p. 269.

³ Letter XIII, Vol. I. p. 299.

⁴ Letter XIX.

Emperor. "His expression, 'Ma vie politique est terminée,' cut me to the heart."¹ He insists upon the great mistake made by Napoleon in quitting the army, a step which not only lowered Napoleon in his eyes—"a precipitancy which nothing can excuse" in abandoning the cause of liberty—but which in his opinion led directly and irrevocably to St. Helena.

Helen Maria Williams' letters are a great contrast. Throughout she strives desperately to belittle Napoleon's achievements and to deny his popularity. To her the march from Elba is merely the natural outcome of a widespread military conspiracy; she arrays against the usurper the hostility not only of party but of sex. "The iron of tyranny had entered into the souls" of the women of France:² she lays stress on his wolf-like cowardice, his dependence on his Ministers, his reluctant, discredited capitulation to ideology; maintains that his only supporters are the canaille. To her the Champ de Mai is summed up in the acclamation, "Long live the Emperor and his fireworks," and finally Napoleon's flight to Paris, which filled Hobhouse with regret, fills her with triumph. "This act of cowardice had of late years been habitual to Bonaparte, and his arrival was always the signal of dire distress."³ She contrasts his conduct with "the heroic courage of the grenadiers of the Imperial Guard," a high tribute to the latter, as she had previously declared these "pretorians" to be hated in France as the rampart of imperial despotism. And her hostility is retro-

¹ Letter XXV, Vol. II. p. 9.

² *Narrative*, p. 65.

³ *Ibid.* p. 180.

spective, attacking as it does the whole system of the Empire. "The policy of Napoleon soared far beyond the trite and vulgar maxims of moral conduct."¹ She inveighs against principles, public and private, which were regulated by self-interest alone and guided by Machiavelli: comments on his idea that the inhabitants of France were his property, on his dislike of Tacitus and admiration of Tiberius. She speaks sneeringly of Napoleon's desire not to be considered a mere warrior, but to send his name down to posterity linked with some institution; he wished to be the founder of a faith—hence came his toleration. The foundation of his despotism she attributes² to the vanity of the French, flattered by the appellation of "the great nation"; whereas Hobhouse considers it due to the fact, first, that Napoleon stood for equality in the eyes of the French—"the power of individual exertion and the original equality of man" were conspicuous, he says, in Napoleon and his generals—the nation had abandoned Liberty and Fraternity, only to cling more closely to Equality; and secondly, that "perpetual war and victory furnished an excuse for extending the autocracy to a general—for which the necessity is acknowledged in the freest nations." It does not at all follow that they will tolerate the yoke of 30,000 nobles.³

Lastly, Miss Williams totally disbelieves in the new constitutional *régime* of Bonaparte. It is disappointing to find so essentially English a view of Napoleon coming from Paris, but it must be re-

¹ *Narrative*, p. 125.

² *Ibid.* p. 123.

³ Letter VI, Vol. I. p. 101.

membered that she, like Coleridge, belonged to the disappointed and exacerbated party which originally supported the Revolution, and saw the ruin of its hopes in the establishment of the military despotism.

At Vienna, when the news arrived that Napoleon had landed at Cannes, the Allied sovereigns and diplomatists are said to have burst into laughter. And this was a distinct note in England for a short time, though amazement first, and indignation next, held the upper hand. There is a characteristic passage in one of Carlyle's early letters,¹ which shows the mixture of amusement and amazement with which it was greeted. Who would have thought, he writes, "that little Nap. would rise Phoenix-like, determined 'to die with harness on his back?' But when the whole world is against thee, why should I be thine enemy? I fear thou art on slippery ice; still thou hast many a trick." The Duke of Wellington² is hardly more serious. His idea was that a Republic was to be got up in France by Lucien Bonaparte and Carnot, and that it would be a tragedy by Bonaparte, by stiletto or otherwise, within a few weeks. Nevertheless, when Bonaparte was seen to be firmly seated on the throne, the march from Elba was looked on in a different light, and, as usual, we find that, as time goes on, a more intelligent view is taken of the event—always excepting the wild and wandering words of Cobbett, who in 1834 maintained that the British Government brought Napoleon back from Elba in order to have an excuse for crushing the nascent

¹ March 25, 1815 : Vol. I. p. 37.

² *Creevey Papers*, April 22, 1815 : Vol. I. p. 215.

prosperity of France. The *Edinburgh Review*,¹ always sane in political matters, attributes Bonaparte's restoration, "a bloodless and orderly military sedition" resembling revolutions in Oriental countries, to four principal causes:—first, the condition and character of the French people; secondly, the administrative measures of the restored French Government; thirdly, the example of other restored Governments; fourthly, above all, the state of the French army.

It proceeds to enlarge on the first point, calling especial attention to Bonaparte's nobility, "an institution framed to secure the triumph of all these vanities"² (*i.e.* of the middle classes and the peasantry, previously humiliated by the nobility), and to provide against the possibility of a second humiliation;" to the Legion of Honour, by means of which "the vanity of the former *rotouriers* was embodied against the vanity of the former nobility"; to the civil officers of the Empire, whose "gratitude, resentment and expectations bound them to the fortune of Napoleon"; and to the support given to him by the peasantry because they possessed confiscated property—we note here that the *Edinburgh Review* appreciated the fact that Napoleon was regarded in France as the guardian of the results of the Revolution; by the fickle populace of the great

¹ February 1815; but it came out much later: Vol. XXIV. p. 518.

² We may compare a remark taken from *The Times* (January 8, 1814): "The Almanack Imperial will show us how largely Bonaparte has drawn on the vanity of mankind. His whole Empire is as gaudy as the concluding scene of a pantomime. It is one brilliant shower of coronets and ribbons and grand crosses and little crosses."

towns because they were proud of his conquests ; by the Protestants because he gave them toleration. Romilly,¹ a Whig of the type represented by the *Review*, also lays stress on the last point, declaring that the Protestants enjoyed much greater security under Bonaparte than under Louis.

Edmund Boyce, whose book (1816) on the *Second Usurpation of Bonaparte*, is a reasonably fair and impartial statement of facts, attributes Bonaparte's return to the French character, in which the endless changes of the Revolution had engrained a restlessness and desire for novelty, and to the democratic nature of the army, which caused people to be discontented with their station ;² and the *Quarterly*,³ as well as Miss Williams, mentions the support given him by the Revolutionary faction, which he "dreaded but had to encourage." It elsewhere remarks,⁴ with, I think, truth, that he made his attempt too soon in the "last and guiltiest of his enterprises." He could not restore his old despotism, so had to make a virtue of necessity. Hobhouse, on the other hand, in his *Diary*,⁵ says that he came just in time to take advantage of the Revolutionary spirit, and prevent the establishment of a republic, which would have shut him out for ever, and, curiously enough, Sir Walter Scott seems to agree. He says that even if Bonaparte had not returned, there would have been an explosion in France, due to the pretensions of the emigrant

¹ *Memoirs*, May 23, 1816 : Vol. III. p. 243.

² Chapter I. ³ October 1815, on Bonaparte.

⁴ July 1815 : Vol. XIII. p. 493.

⁵ *Recollections*, *Diary*, April 18 : Vol. I. p. 266.

clergy and noblesse, whom the Liberalists opposed "without having originally any purpose of throwing themselves into the arms of Bonaparte." But above all, Englishmen, led by Lord Castlereagh, took the view that his return was entirely due to the French army,¹ whose complete extirpation was, if we may believe Creevey, preached in fashionable circles in London. There is very little trace of Hobhouse's ideas save in the remarks of an ultra-Liberal like Burdett, who asked,² "Was it not plain that Bonaparte was the Ruler of the French people's choice?" The nation wished for him, partly owing to their dislike of the Bourbons. His abolition of the slave trade is a contrast with the conduct of the latter.

The great question which exercised England was whether to go to war with Bonaparte or not. The warlike party had almost the whole country at their back, but their opponents were not wanting in debate. A series of important discussions took place in the House:³ the arguments are thus summarized by Romilly in his *Memoirs*. *For war*:—There is no security⁴ for England with Bonaparte at the head of the French Government, as he is irreconcilably hostile to us. Under him France must be a military nation, and an armed peace is as

¹ Thus W. Elliot in the House calls his return "a solemn lesson to all military governments, for a more tremendous example of a sovereign raised to a throne by the power of the soldiery had not been presented to the world since the days of the Romans." J. Scott, more tersely, calls it "a piece of ruffian violence."

² *Parl. Debates*, April 7, 1815.

³ April 7, 20 : Commons, April 12 : Lords.

⁴ Pitt's phrase lives on a decade after his death.

hurtful to England as open war. The present union of our allies might soon be ended. *For peace*:— Though Bonaparte's professions are not sincere, they are forced on him by facts, as he has to cultivate the favour of those who want free government. The hostility of the Allies could alone free him from these by re-erecting the military monarchy. A rest for a few years would benefit us more than France; and the union of our Allies is not to be depended upon. These views, or rather those in favour of war, are satirized by Hobhouse,¹ but they show clearly the prevalent view of Napoleon. Throughout we find the Tories and most of the Whigs declaring that Bonaparte was supported by the military alone, the Liberals considering him as supported by the people. Hence, while Whitbread claims that he is sincere² and that at all events he could be trusted as much as Talleyrand, Ponsonby³ admits that his personal character does not invite confidence, yet circumstances might make it safe to trust him. No doubt, too, he is wiser by experience, and as he is now old, he would be less likely to undertake great projects. Romilly⁴ commented on his extraordinary moderation, his renunciation of the grand Empire, his professed desire for peace and his grant of a Constitution, as "probably insincere, but that he should make them is extraordinary."

Other Opposition arguments⁵ omitted the personal

¹ See Appendix.

² *Parl. Debates*. Cobbett in later years agrees; "for he knew the French wanted peace." He adds characteristically enough, "He still clung to his stupid title of Emperor."

³ *Parl. Debates*.

⁴ *Memoirs*, April 4, 1815: Vol. III. p. 160.

⁵ *Parl. Debates*, April 7, 12, 20.

factor; *e. g.* Bonaparte's gigantic power in 1811 was due to the previous wars (Burdett), an idea which, we have seen, was prevalent among the enemies of the Government. War would rouse the national spirit of France: it was likely that, if Bonaparte fell, some one else would take his place (Whitbread). No efforts had been made by him to conciliate the army (Tierney). Again, the Whigs disliked a war for the restoration of the Bourbons, and "the still more indefensible principle of proscribing an individual to destruction."¹

On the other hand, the Tories² laid especial stress on his personal character. This invasion of France, or rather of Europe, was an act of revenge (F. Douglas); his abolition of the slave trade was dictated by interest alone (C. Grant). His promulgation of a Constitution was no pledge of his good faith. It is preposterous to believe that he would submit to it; because he must attend to the wishes of the army, which repined in inactivity, and because he was thoroughly unscrupulous. But the real ground of the Tory resistance to Napoleon, the higher reason which underlay the whole of the great war, is expressed by the Marquis of Wellesley in the House of Lords.³ "He had ever considered Bonaparte as the mainspring of that system which it was peculiarly the duty and interest of this country to resist; but . . . although he had viewed in Bonaparte the most active and efficient advocate of that system which the French Revolution had

¹ Horner, *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 244.

² *Parl. Debates*, April 7, 12, 20.

³ *Ibid.* April 19.

produced, still he had never ceased to think that person most likely to expose this very system to destruction, provided there was sufficient concert among the Powers of Europe to avail themselves of his errors." Here we have in a nutshell the whole Tory view of Napoleon, the identification of Napoleon with the Revolution, the opposition to both, the idea that Napoleon was not irresistible. The Tory hostility, the conflict of system, was based on a broader ground than that of those Whigs who merely hated the military despotism.

A point upon which the admirers of Bonaparte laid stress, and which even some of his enemies had to admit, was that his treatment at Elba gave him some excuse for his attempt. Thus Miss Berry,¹ who, in her conceited and rather priggish way, is usually impartial and sensible, says that England is not justified in going to war. It is childish to say that Bonaparte has broken the treaty. He was a prisoner, and no one in a similar situation who possessed the means would not have tried to deliver himself. We have seen how Hobhouse compared Napoleon's position in February 1815 with that of Frederick William in 1814 or Francis in 1813, and further, it was declared, *e. g.* by Whitbread,² that the Allies had broken the treaty and had made a mistake in so doing. Holland³ holds that the supposed discussion in 1814 as to transporting Bonaparte to St. Helena alone justified the Hundred Days. Of course there was no such discussion. But Napoleon

¹ *Journals and Correspondence*, April 30 : Vol. III. p. 49.

² *Parl. Debates*, April 5.

³ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 195.

probably thought that there was—at any rate Bertrand did, as is clear from Major Vivian's account¹ of his interviews with Napoleon and Bertrand at Elba. This officer considered that this notion of Napoleon's was the probable cause of the Hundred Days, and that there was no conspiracy in France.² Abercombie³ said that the Allies should have taken great care to carry out the provisions as to his wife and child; and the *Edinburgh Review*⁴ is sweeping in its condemnation of their conduct. They "ought to have watched him without trying to cheat him. They are said to have done precisely the reverse." Lord Liverpool,⁵ it is fair to add, denied that the King of France had infringed the Treaty, and was quite sincere in his belief—England had insisted, though without complete success, on the proper fulfilment of the Treaty. Further, he observed⁶ with truth that Bonaparte had not used the non-payment of his money as a pretext. "He averred that he had come to reclaim his crown because summoned to it by the voice of the nation."

Then came the campaign of Waterloo: the result according to Creevey was "what everybody expected except Lord Grey." It hardly made the same stir as the abdication in the previous year, if we may believe Cobbett. The opinions of Lord Grey and Mr. Bennet, the only two whom I have

¹ *Pitt and Napoleon*, p. 178.

² Croker also thought that there was no conspiracy, but that Bonaparte came, "with characteristic audacity," to try his luck. (*Correspondence and Diaries*, Vol. I. p. 66.)

³ *Parl. Debates*, April 20.

⁴ February 1815: Vol. XXIV. p. 514.

⁵ *Memoirs*, p. 427.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 429.

found sanguine as to the French chances, were largely based on the precedent of the events of 1792-5. The latter ¹ puts his confidence in the Jacobins: "All the youth of France will come out with them, and then let me see the state your kings will be in. For my part, if your kings could succeed, I should be miserable": while Grey ² considers that the military spirit, and therefore to some extent the devotion to Bonaparte, is diffused through France. Bonaparte has the whole resources of the country at his back, and it is contrary to the principle of human nature to overcome the resistance of an armed nation. None of the accounts of Waterloo written in 1815 are worth much. The Duke of Wellington was "ashamed" at the nonsense written about "the transactions at Waterloo." "One would imagine that the British army had never been engaged in a battle before," he wrote to a too zealous admirer. All the accounts, especially that of the *Quarterly*, whose figures are wildly wrong, are very exaggerated, more so than those models of intentional inaccuracy, Napoleon's bulletins; and the first really satisfactory account of the campaign, one which does full justice to Napoleon and his troops, is given by Edmund Boyce (1816).³ Otherwise the general feeling of England was one of exultation at the thought that the best troops of

¹ *Creevey Papers*, June 13: Vol. I. p. 217.

² *Liverpool, Memoirs*, p. 503.

³ Vol. II. Chapter II and III. Lord Teignmouth, however, who was at Brussels at the time, remarked on the evenness and desperate character of the battle (*Diary*, June 23, in his *Reminiscences*). He adds that if Bonaparte had won, Belgium would have declared for him."

France under their greatest commander should have been defeated by a far inferior force of Allies—so it was believed—under Wellington.¹

¹ *Note.*—In later years, Cobbett, true to his habit of belittling his country to the advantage of her enemies, attributes Napoleon's defeat to treachery: "But it was all treachery."¹ Hobhouse in his Diary (June 26) ascribes it to "the perseverance of the English, and his own obstinacy in making an effort at so late an hour when his troops were exhausted."

¹ *George IV*, Vol. II. Section 233.

SECTION IV

ST. HELENA

DURING the next few weeks exciting events took place, and it is quite possible that Napoleon enjoyed a degree of popularity in England which he had not attained since 1802. The pride of the nation was flattered by the submission of the great conqueror, and personal contact with Englishmen hardly ever failed to make the Emperor popular with those whom he met. Not that the events which immediately succeeded Waterloo raised him in English estimation. We have seen how Hobhouse, more in sorrow than in anger, blamed him for his desertion of the army, and Cobbett,¹ who, though he published much later, probably voiced the feelings of most Englishmen at the time, considers "Napoleon's conduct after Waterloo the most contemptible, the most ridiculously base of any man that ever lived. Beaten, abandoned, become nothing, his execrable vanity still clung to him," and goes on to comment on his "base" appeal to George, Prince Regent, as a "generous enemy." This letter roused various feelings. The *Quarterly*² also condemns it, but on very different grounds: "The bad taste—

¹ *George IV*, Vol. II. Section 237.

² October 1815: Vol. XIV. p. 83.

the absurd and laughable introduction of Themistocles *sur les foyers Britanniques*, the meanness, the beggarly adulation of the Prince Regent of England;” and Croker, reading it in the presence of several Frenchmen, showed his unfailing delicacy by “bursting out into a loud laugh, which astonished the French, who thought all beautiful, but Thémistocle sublime and pathetic.” “I called it a base flattery,” he adds.¹ Whereas Lord Holland² contrasts the attitude of the Black Prince and the Regent towards a “fallen competitor, or a dethroned usurper,” and Hobhouse in his Diary³ describes his letter to the Prince Regent⁴ as “very good.” Hazlitt also praises it, but as he also finds matter for panegyric in the clause of Napoleon’s will which left a sum of money to Wellington’s would-be murderer, his opinion hardly goes for much.

Bonaparte’s arrival in England caused immense excitement. Home, who was a midshipman on board the *Bellerophon*, gives an amusing account⁵ of how, when he landed at Torquay, a large party of young ladies overwhelmed him with questions about Bonaparte: “Was he really a man?” “Were his hands and his clothes all over with blood when he came on board?” “Was his voice like thunder?” and there is universal testimony to the

¹ Croker, *Correspondence and Diaries*, Vol. I. p. 68.

² *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*, p. 219.

³ *Recollections*, Diary, July 28: Vol. I. p. 322.

⁴ The attitude of this distinguished potentate towards Napoleon with regard to the letter is narrated by Holland. His remark on it was: “A very proper letter, I must say, and better than any which Louis XVIII ever wrote to me.”

⁵ *Memoirs of an Aristocrat*.

anxiety to see him as he paced the quarter-deck of the *Bellerophon*. The newspapers continued to "load him with the lowest and meanest abuse,"¹ but apparently the attitude of the Torquay crowds was anything but hostile. The attention paid to Napoleon seems to have thoroughly annoyed his enemies: in fact Hobhouse in his Diary² directly says that "Ministers are angry at the distinction paid him, and because people stand with their hats off in his presence"; and we find Sidmouth,³ always weakly rancorous, disgusted by the "extravagant courtesy and respect with which he was at first treated."

Finally came the despatch of Napoleon to St. Helena, a step which evoked a chorus of disapproval from Napoleon's admirers.⁴ Previously Hobhouse⁵ had said that, if the English treat Napoleon unworthily, the disgrace will fall on them, not on him, "who will gain from his manly support of severity the only credit which can now attract the notice of mankind to the future portion of his life." Now his expressions are even stronger. In his Diary he writes,⁶ "So ends the greatest man of modern times, overwhelmed by a monstrous coalition, but owing his final overthrow to a single step of imprudence—his return to Paris after Waterloo;"

¹ Romilly, *Memoirs*, August 1815: Vol. III. p. 192.

² *Recollections*, Diary, July 28: Vol. I. p. 322.

³ Addington, *Life and Letters*, July 30.

⁴ Twenty-three years later Home said that "his blood boiled with indignation and his face blushed crimson for his degraded country" at the proceeding which will be "a vile stain upon our name to the latest ages."

⁵ Letter XXXVII, Vol. II. p. 203.

⁶ *Recollections*, Diary, August 9: Vol. I. p. 323.

and in his Letters from Paris : ¹ " the consummate injustice of such a measure is only to be equalled by the pleasantry of boasting of it as an act of clemency." In the House of Lords, Lord Holland denounced the conduct of the Ministry as " unworthy the magnanimity of a great country," and " repugnant to the principles of equity and utterly uncalled for by experience or necessity." On the other hand, we find Scott ² ridiculing the sympathy for Napoleon : " Since his sentence of transportation Bonaparte has begun to look wonderfully comely in the eyes of the Whigs. I would they had hanged him, that he might have died a perfect saint ;" and Sidmouth speaks about " the custody of the tiger."

During his voyages to and from England Napoleon came into contact with several Englishmen, some of whom, Home of the *Bellerophon*, Warden and Glover of the *Northumberland*, wrote down their impressions of him. Home ³ is a strong admirer, almost a worshipper. There is no end to his admiration. Gourgaud is to him " a complete specimen of the men that Napoleon pitched upon to execute his daring projects." He speaks of the Emperor's " keen, calm, meditative grey eye," " the calm majesty of his deportment through this tragic scene," his kindness to children, which displayed his real character, his temperate habits, " his great and intrinsic humanity," shown by his conduct to Keith's wounded relative at Waterloo. He describes the respect shown to him on the *Bellerophon*,

¹ Letter XXXVII, Vol. II. p. 204.

² *Letters*, October 1815 : Vol. III. p. 380.

³ The author of *Memoirs of an Aristocrat*.

a respect which Lord Keith also shared, as is clear from the following story narrated by Home. As Napoleon delayed crossing to the *Northumberland*, Cockburn wished to hurry him up; but Lord Keith replied, "No, no, much greater men than either you or I have waited longer for him before now; let him take his time, let him take his time." Home adds, "This was nobly said of the fine old Scotsman." He thus describes Napoleon's departure. "How distinct is every feature, every trait, every line of that majestic countenance in my mind's eye . . . but who could witness such a scene and ever forget it! The Romans said that a great man struggling with adversity pleased the gods, and here was true greatness struggling against it; but to a mere mortal it was a heart-rending sight. . . . Even in this hour of hopeless misery he lost not sight of that indescribable charm by which he won the hearts of men . . . even the rough countenances of the men bespoke a sympathy for his cruel fate."

Glover of the *Northumberland* is by no means of the same opinion. He probably took his opinions from his superior, Lord Cockburn, who was not partial to Napoleon. Neither he nor his master considered Bonaparte a gentleman. Bonaparte, he says, at first tried "to lead the life of a gentleman and to imitate English manners" (was this synonymous to Glover's mind?), "but after a fortnight he confined himself to tyrannizing over his abject followers. Their servility no Englishman can conceive of." Unlike everybody else, he gives an unfavourable account of Napoleon's physical appearance: "countenance remarkable, but not par-

ticularly commanding," "rather corpulent";¹ and he is no more favourable to his character; he denies him any feelings, either personal or religious, and says that he has no consideration for his followers; and his final summary—amusing enough when we consider the writer and his subject—runs as follows: "Greatness of mind or character in my opinion he possesses not, very frequently acting the part of a spoilt child." Cockburn's own opinion was not very favourable. On August 8, 1816, Croker writes: "Cockburn . . . gives us no hopes of Bonaparte's dying. He eats, he says, enormously, but he drinks little, takes regular exercise, and is in all respects so very careful of his carcass that he may live twenty years. Cockburn and he parted bad friends."²

Warden's Letters have to be used with great caution. It seems probable³ that he sent a rough draft of his conversations with Napoleon, conducted through the untrustworthy medium of Las Cases, to a "literary gentleman," who drew them up in literary and possibly imaginative form. There is no doubt, however, as to the genuineness of the dominant note of his letters, that is, his insistence on the good-humour and geniality of Napoleon. These are not the sort of qualities that a "literary gentleman" would be likely to invent for the great conqueror, nor can they be attributed to the interpretership of Las Cases; so, unless Warden himself is a downright liar, we may take this as his sincere

¹ Cp. Campbell, *Diary on Elba*, p. 234: "Indefatigable as he is, his corpulency prevents him from walking much."

² *Correspondence and Diaries*, Vol. I. p. 88.

³ See *Dictionary of National Biography*.

view of the character of Napoleon. This good-humour is emphasized everywhere: at the card-table, where "our extraordinary man plays rather a careless game and loses money with great good-humour"; throughout the voyage, for Warden never saw any change in his "placid countenance and unassuming manners"; at the family parties of the Balcombes,¹ where he was "neither troublesome nor intrusive"; at a drive in St. Helena, where "he was the life of the party." Warden clearly fell under the spell of Napoleon's personality; and he bears testimony to another victim, Mr. Raffles, ex-Governor of Java, who was equally delighted with the Emperor. Warden's description of his personal appearance is clear and correct—with a doctor's eye, he observes his splendid health. The "Letters from the Cape of Good Hope" are worthless, especially as they are said to have been concocted by Las Cases; nor do the "Letters from St. Helena, exposing the unnecessary severity exercised towards Napoleon," give us much light, apart from the assertions that the officers of the 53rd were pleased with Napoleon's liking for them, and felt mortified at his treatment; and that the suite of Lord Amherst, Ambassador to China, entertained the same views.

The Diary of Lady Malcolm is, of course, authentic, but she, as the mouthpiece of her husband, is reticent with regard to her view of his character. The Admiral's impression of his exterior was, "an Italian expression of countenance which he could

¹ Meanwhile, libellers in England were narrating stories of Napoleon's ferocity to children and general boorishness at the Balcombes.

imagine at times very different according to the humour of the man; his manners plain and agreeable."

By far the best account of Napoleon at St. Helena is to be found in Basil Hall's *Voyage to Loo Choo*. This account is admirable, restrained and sagacious in tone, and gives one a fine impression of Hall's own character. Throughout, he lays stress on Bonaparte's intellectual supremacy; "the opportunities which his elevated situation had given Napoleon of obtaining information on almost every subject, and his vast power of rapid and correct observation;"¹ and again, "It would have been impossible to have concealed or qualified the smallest particular. Such indeed was the rapidity of his apprehension of the subjects which interested him, and the astonishing ease with which he arranged and generalized the few points of information I gave him." There is a remark worth noting as showing that Bonaparte's designs on the East ("This old Europe bores me") were now clearly appreciated by Englishmen: "His interest in Loo Choo shows the sincerity of his Eastern predilections." Hall was favourably impressed both with Napoleon's appearance and manners: it is necessary to lay stress on the last point as contradicting the general view of the time. Thus Hall comments on the "brilliant and dazzling expression of his eye,"² on "the patience and kindness with which he waited for my answers," on the "cheerfulness and familiarity" with which he conversed, and which "not only put me quite at my ease in his presence, but made

¹ *Voyage to Loo Choo*, p. 314.

² *Ibid.* p. 315.

me repeatedly forget that respectful attention with which it was my duty as well as my wish to treat the fallen monarch "; and he thus summarizes his idea of Napoleon : " It is impossible to imagine an expression of more entire mildness, I may almost call it of benignity and kindness, than that which played over his features during the whole interview. If, therefore, he were at this time out of health and in low spirits, his power of self-command must have been even more extraordinary than is generally supposed ; for his whole deportment, his conversation and the expression of his countenance indicated a frame in perfect health and a mind at ease." ¹

Subsequently Croker and Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer, met Hall at dinner. When Hall mentioned Napoleon's astonishment at hearing that the Loo Choo islanders had no warlike appliances, everybody was amused, except Vansittart, who appeared half asleep. He suddenly, however, awoke from his torpor on hearing Hall declare that the islanders had no money, and his remark : " Good heavens ! how do they carry on their government ? " was an exact counterpart of Napoleon's " Diable ! et comment font-ils la guerre ? " ²

It is unnecessary here to go further into the gloomy story of St. Helena. Looking back after so many years, it is easy to blame the Government for what was in some cases unnecessary severity to Napoleon ;

¹ p. 321. Sir Walter Scott's comment (*Familiar Letters*, March 1818 : Vol. II. p. 15) on this interview is : " Bonaparte maintained his credit as a Charlatan."

² Croker, *Correspondence and Diaries*, Vol. I. p. 111.

but when we consider their view of the man, their idea "that he was the mainspring of the system which it was peculiarly the duty of England to combat," that for twenty-three years they had fought against the idea of which he was in their eyes the representative, when we further take into consideration the inadequate but not altogether unjustifiable notion which they entertained of his character, it is difficult to see how they could have acted otherwise. They might, it is true, have refrained from childish annoyances, such as allowing him only the title of General Bonaparte, but in creating irritation for himself, Napoleon, it must be admitted, went halfway to meet them. Even Lord Holland confesses: "A contemptible punctilio led Napoleon at St. Helena to reject any communication in which his title of Emperor was not preserved." ¹

On the other hand, the Government might have made a better choice of a governor. Hudson Lowe was accurately and succinctly summarized by the Duke of Wellington as "a damned fool"; and the same high authority thought that, if Governor Wilks had been retained, there would have been a different story to tell. That this is probable can be seen from the account which Wilks gives of his conversations with Napoleon.² It is clear that Napoleon and Wilks were on good terms, that Wilks stood up to Napoleon and argued with him, and that in consequence Napoleon respected Wilks.

As to the Opposition, Napoleon, once talking to his followers, criticized as a bathos the line, "De

¹ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 195.

² See *Monthly Review*, January 1901.

tout mon vaste Empire il me reste un rocher.”¹
Such was the attitude of the Opposition towards St. Helena :

“ Smile to survey the queller of the nations
Now daily haggling o’er disputed rations.”²

A few voices, like that of Lord Holland, were from time to time heard on Napoleon’s behalf, until he gradually became a mere memory, and his death excited more moralizing than interest in English opinion.

¹ *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 295.

² Byron, *Age of Bronze*, III.

CHAPTER IV
MILITARY CRITICISMS

MILITARY CRITICISMS

HERE Bonaparte's detractors were rather at a loss, at all events before 1812. It would never do to give him unstinted praise for anything, yet one would need to be very bold or very foolish to decry Napoleon's military genius. Lieutenant Scarratt does attempt to do so; but it is clear enough to which of the above-mentioned classes he belongs. Even he, too, has to invent excuses for Bonaparte's success: he lays stress on superior numbers, just as others attribute the management of the campaigns to Berthier. Most English writers, however, frankly acknowledge Napoleon's military abilities, though usually they do so only to throw into blacker relief the "qualities of his heart" as contrasted with those of his head.

Perhaps the clearest way to deal with this subject will be first to examine the contemporary criticisms of Napoleon's separate campaigns, then to notice in what light English public opinion regarded the French army, and lastly to touch on the general impression left by Napoleon's military genius on the English mind.

SECTION I

NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGNS

To the campaigns of 1796-7 and of 1800 Englishmen gave rather a grudging admiration—the military side of the Egyptian campaign was more or less ignored. They could not altogether explain away Napoleon's success, but found, or tried to find, depreciatory circumstances. Thus Scarratt, whose work¹ is all the more disappointing because he was a military man himself, writes, "To the uncommon success which attended Bonaparte during the whole of the campaign of 1796 he undoubtedly owes . . . his reputation"; and while admitting his "considerable military talents," declares that they are not so great as his supporters imagine, because he was helped by the mistakes of the Austrians, and by their discouragement after defeat, also by superior numbers. On the other hand, he is more just when he criticizes Bonaparte's wastefulness of men, instancing the carrying of the Bridge of Lodi. Napoleonic warfare consisted of grand "coups," and thus entailed heavy losses, as numerous instances from Lodi to Waterloo show us clearly enough.

Nor is Scarratt more impartial when dealing with the Marengo campaign. While he is more or less justified in denying Bonaparte praise for Marengo

¹ *Life of Bonaparte*, 1805.

itself, he says not a word of the brilliant campaign which preceded it, and can only account for the French success in the campaign by enlarging on their superior numbers. As a matter of fact, the French were distinctly less numerous than the Austrians, both in the campaign and in the battle.

Windham, speaking in Parliament on July 9, 1800, is no more enthusiastic in Bonaparte's praise. He admits Bonaparte's talents in war, but only to add that military success owes much to luck, and that Suvoroff's campaign can be compared to any of Napoleon's. Windham, it may be added in parenthesis, is more generous to the French army as apart from its commander. After speaking of the "more untrammelled style of French fighting since the Revolution," he adds, "their authority at this time it is not for Europe to dispute."

Napoleon had not yet, it is clear, begun to exercise that mastery over the minds of his opponents which was so important a factor in his later wars. Mr. Wickham, writing from the Austrian headquarters in Germany on March 27, 1800,¹ describes the ability of the Austrian generals, especially Colonel Weyrother, "praised by Bonaparte," and states his "firm belief that we have force enough to beat all that Bonaparte can bring against us." Though Marengo shook his confidence and entirely changed his mind as to Austrian generalship—stupidity and fatness in body and mind, possibly due to excessive tobacco, he considers their leading

¹ *Fortescue Papers*, Vol. V. p. 183. Weyrother was a general of the Mack type, and was largely responsible for the *débâcle* at Austerlitz.

characteristics—he nevertheless says that with good leadership the Austrians “would beat the French army to pieces, even with Bonaparte at its head, and the ghost of Desaix to boot to direct and encourage it in battle.”

Far more striking to the English mind were the four great campaigns, those of Ulm and Austerlitz, of Jena, of Eylau, and of Friedland, which conquered Europe, and displayed Napoleonic warfare at its zenith of skill and power. Nevertheless, Englishmen are characteristically reticent with regard to the victories of enemies—so we have not many data from which to observe the growth of admiration for the military talents of the Emperor. Of the fine manœuvres which led up to Jena and Friedland we hear not one word, thanks, partially, no doubt, to the lack of clear intelligence of them, but probably also to national dislike of discussing anything so distasteful. It is clear that Englishmen caught at any gleam of light. Eylau, which was at best a drawn battle, they magnified into a French defeat. In Parliament, Castlereagh¹ thus mentioned that contest: “In the battle of Eylau, when France felt herself engaged with an enemy so different from any she had hitherto encountered, the Prussian Corps under General Lestocq materially contributed to the fortunate issue of that day.” Perhaps it was General Wilson who spread this idea. He was the most systematic detractor of Bonaparte throughout this period, and according to his book on the Russian army and the campaign in Poland, the French always were in superior

¹ *Parl. Debates*, July 31, 1807.

numbers and always had the advantage of ground. If that was so, it was surely contradictory to accuse Napoleon of want of skill in this campaign, as Wilson does ; for after all, skilful generalship largely consists of these two points, the concentration of superior force and the occupation of advantageous terrain. But Wilson, in his blind hatred of Napoleon, goes further, and even impugns his courage ; for when it was no longer possible to doubt Napoleon's talents, this resource was always open to his detractors. Needless to add, Wilson magnifies Eylau into a great Russian victory.

At the capitulation of Ulm, Englishmen were as unable to disguise their astonishment at this unprecedented strategy as the French soldiers themselves. Thus Lord Grenville¹ writes : " The calamity exceeds the first report of it. An army of 100,000 reckoned the best troops in Europe, totally destroyed in three weeks without, as far as yet appears, sustaining any one considerable action ; and 36,000 of them capitulating on a bare statement of the positions occupied by their enemy . . . really confound one's imagination." At the same time the French soldiers were saying that the Emperor had discovered a new method of making war ; he no longer employs his soldiers' arms, but their legs to win battles.

Yet even the Ulm-Austerlitz campaign had its detractors. Mr. W. Hunter,² another irreconcilable, and Dumouriez, perhaps jealous as well as hostile, passed adverse judgments on it ; and are very

¹ *Fortescue Papers*, November 5, 1805 : Vol. VII. p. 311.

² *Reasons for not making Peace*,

properly criticized for them in the *Edinburgh Review*,¹ a periodical which was always very sound in military matters. The former says that the third coalition, though admirably managed, failed owing to the coincidence of several circumstances which it was impossible to foresee, and not to Bonaparte's genius. Though, says our worthy pamphleteer, we must allow him credit for "celerity and decision," yet his conduct "was strongly illustrative of a total absence not only of political sagacity, but of common-sense," and also displayed "a most irrational temerity."² Success is a false criterion. This last tenet the *Edinburgh Review* attacks in its article on Dumouriez, where it points out the insincerity and foolishness of the view that, if Bonaparte succeeds a hundred times, it is all good luck, while if he fails once, it is his own fault; and when Dumouriez suggests that in December the Austro-Russians should have moved through Bohemia and struck at Bonaparte's communications in Bavaria, the *Review* very pertinently points out that Bonaparte with one of his rapid movements would have overtaken them, cut them off and brought them to a battle, the result of which would have been even more disastrous than Austerlitz.

Napoleon's campaign in Spain was regarded by most sensible Englishmen as a foregone conclusion,—"The Spanish mass," says Windham³ on February 1809," has no chance of stopping Bonaparte's advance,"—and is only worth mentioning on account

¹ July 1807, on Dumouriez, Vol. X.

² Similar remarks were applied by *The Times* in 1814 to Montmirail and Vauchamps.

³ *Speeches*, February 24, 1809: Vol. III. p. 174.

of some expressions used by Wellington on October 19, 1809,¹ which show that he understood Napoleonic strategy : he says that if the Spanish armies do not conclude their present operations in time, they will suffer the same fate as the Austrians at Marengo, who were delayed at Gênoa by Massena, so that they had to fight in a disadvantageous situation.

The campaign of 1809 excited great interest in England, owing, mainly, to the result of the battle of Aspern, but also to the facts that England was herself engaged on the Continent, and that Napoleon felt the stiffening of resistance in a really national war. This last factor is brought out by the *Edinburgh Review*.² Austria's position in 1809, it remarks, was more favourable than at any period since the French Revolution ; it adduces not only the reforms in the army and the appointment of the Archduke Charles,³ but, " what is more important, the great

¹ Castlereagh, *Despatches*, etc., October 19, 1808 : Vol. VI. p. 477.

² 1811 : Vol. XVIII. pp. 403-4.

³ The Archduke aroused great confidence in England ; on April 24, 1809, *The Times*, after comparing Bonaparte with Hannibal—in military talents and moral vices, perfidy, cruelty, treatment of conquered towns, *e. g.* Saguntum and Saragossa—adds, " We hope that a modern Scipio has been found to avenge his country and deliver mankind." (It is a curious fact that the modern Scipio was being found, though not on the Danube, but on the scene of the triumphs of his prototype.) This confidence grew to enthusiasm after Aspern : " How wonderful must have been the efforts, and how comprehensive the genius of the Archduke ; " and, commenting (July 12) on the Austrian account of Aspern, it says that " during this wondrous battle the two commanders appear . . . almost of equal genius and talents," and proceeds, " We cannot withhold an inferior tribute of admiration from the defeated Corsican. Probably only one man could have wrested his title of invincible " from him.

improvement in the feeling of the people," their hatred for France, and their perception of the necessity for exertions—so different to what was the case in previous wars. The writer appreciates the difficulty of Napoleon's position after Aspern—a battle which, as we have seen, made a great stir in Europe—when he writes that an English force landing at Trieste might have been of great service in attacking the rear of the enemy, "opposed in front to a force which had just overthrown him in the greatest battle he ever gave." Similarly Castlereagh in the House,¹ defending the Walcheren expedition, spoke of the "nice balance and uncertainty after Aspern," and of the hopes of all Europe. In Canning² also we find a reference to Aspern: he speaks of Bonaparte's "defeat at Aspern and the shutting himself up after that defeat in the island of Inder-Lobau—a step condemned by military men, which might have led to great disaster." Thus Aspern shook Napoleon's military as well as his political prestige. But Wagram retrieved both. Even *The Times*³ has to admit that his second crossing of the Danube displayed his "transcendent talents and unremitting energy," so when the campaign was over, there again settled down on England a sense of the tremendous power and talent of Bonaparte, which now appeared almost irresistible. After Wagram, Windham⁴ thought that "the most discouraging consideration is the dreadful inferiority of talent

¹ *Parl. Debates*, March 26, 1810.

² *Speeches*, March 29, 1810: Vol. II. p. 467.

³ July 20, 1809.

⁴ Introduction to Windham's *Speeches*, p. 108.

that appears always on the side of the Austrians. Why is Bonaparte to be able to pass the Danube before the Archduke is apprised of what he is about? I cannot think that this would have happened the other way"; and again, Malmesbury,¹ after mentioning the "rapid marches of Bonaparte," goes on to say, "The course of this war was like that of preceding ones; the French had the advantage in almost all the battles except Aspern, which, had the advantages obtained by the Archduke been followed up, might have given a different turn to the termination of it." "There appears in the whole of this short campaign the public spirit which Walmoden announced, but the same want of military skill and resolution in the commanders as had produced all the failures of those preceding it."

The campaigns which led up to the fall of Napoleon, that of Russia, the two in Saxony and the final one in Champagne, do not appear to have evoked much comment on the purely military side. The political side was too vitally important.

The Russian campaign, even without its tremendous catastrophe, could not fail to impress Englishmen. Byron has a fine description of the retreat, but no one save those who were in Russia at the time seems to have much detailed information about the actual facts of the campaign, and few venture upon any real criticism of it: most are content to attribute its result to an all-ruling Providence.² What Englishmen could understand

¹ *Diaries and Correspondence*, Vol. IV. p. 411.

² Wordsworth says that the French were destroyed by the "still small voice" of the most High.

was the gigantic power that moved against Russia. The *Edinburgh Review* ¹ describes the French army as "the grandest display of force which the world had ever seen, whether we look to the quality and equipment of the troops, the genius, talent and devotion of the leaders, or to the extraordinary and enterprising character of its hitherto victorious chief."

The truest military criticism of the Saxon campaign is to be found in Lord Holland's *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*.² After the Armistice, he writes: "The Allies in number and spirit overpowered the French, and not only the fortune but the genius of Napoleon seems for a short season to have abandoned him. He permitted his enemies to encircle, and his Allies to betray, him in a manner that half his usual military skill or political sagacity would have prevented. This period of unaccountable error terminated in the great battle of Leipsic, fatal to the predominance of Napoleon in Europe, and the only action in his career derogatory to his skill as a general. He was circumvented by men, not only inferior to him, but no wise eminent for talents, experience or judgment." He recurs to this idea of the inferiority of the Allied generals when discussing the campaign of 1814: "It is remarkable that their armies defeated the first general of his age without establishing one military reputation. Schwartzenberg was a mere cypher, Blucher at best a dashing huzzar." Byron indeed found it so remarkable that he attributed both Leipsic and the fall of Napoleon in 1814 to treachery

¹ February 1815 : Vol. XXIV. p. 375.

² p. 181.

and nothing else.¹ The view of Sir Charles Stewart, our attaché at the allied headquarters, is hardly different : on May 31, 1813, he admits ² that there is " no head that is able to cope with Bonaparte's subtlety and military proceedings " among the Allies.

The comments of *The Times* on military subjects usually are not worth much. However just before Leipsic it sums up ³ Bonaparte's position in a graphic simile : " He is in the position of the distressed mariner, who has no sooner made some progress in stopping a leak in one part of the boat than he is called away to exclude the rushing tide from another inlet." After the battle it confines itself mainly to decrying his genius : " Is this the great captain who has hitherto made Europe tremble ? " may be taken as a specimen of its remarks.

In many ways the campaign of 1814 is Bonaparte's masterpiece ; the odds against him were approximately three to one. Nevertheless, in a campaign which the Duke of Wellington, usually no friend to Napoleon, would never hear belittled,⁴ he held his foes at bay for more than two months, inflicted numerous defeats on them, and more than once nearly drove them to retreat on to the Rhine. It

¹ *Age of Bronze*.

² Castlereagh, *Despatches*, 3rd Series, Vol. I. p. 21.

³ October 21, 1813.

⁴ Stanhope in his *Conversations* (p. 12) narrates that when Croker, " with his usual self-confidence," called this campaign unskilful, the Duke replied : " I have studied it very much. . . . In it Bonaparte beat the Austrians, Prussians and Russians—different armies—always with the same troops, and I have had experience enough to know how very exact a man must be in his calculations, and how very skilful in his manœuvres, to be able to do that."

is not surprising then to find Napoleon's detractors reticent on this campaign and his admirers loud in its praise. Lord Holland¹ declares that "his military genius never shone brighter than in that painful campaign," that he was seconded by the army, but the bulk of the nation was weary of war. Hobhouse uses equally high terms of praise, though characteristically enough he applies them more to the army than to the Emperor. Even the *Quarterly*² declares that the victories on the Marne were "as brilliant, though fortunately not as decisive, as Marengo or Jena"; and Sir Charles Stewart, a sound judge and a man of not ungenerous nature, writes on March 22:³ "For myself, I rather like Bonaparte for being another Catiline, and the masterly military movements he has of late made with an inferior army against two armies both superior, must increase his military reputation. I think he has never shown himself greater, or played a desperate game more skilfully than since the battle of Brienne. Before that I thought he had lost all wits."

The military situation in April 1814 was discussed a year later in Parliament.⁴ The Government's interest was to show that it had not granted unduly lenient terms to Napoleon, and therefore to prove that Bonaparte's position at that time was not desperate. While the Opposition pointed to the capture of Paris, and to the fact that the occupation

¹ *Further Memoirs*, p. 187.

² October 1814: Vol. XII. p. 244.

³ Castlereagh, *Despatches*, etc., 3rd Series, I. p. 373.

⁴ *Parl. Debates*, April 12, 1815.

of fortresses in Germany and Holland by the French "were causes of his weakness by dissipating that power which, concentrated, might have been effectual in overthrowing the Allies,"¹ on the other side, Lord Liverpool mentioned the forces of Soult and Suchet as resources upon which Bonaparte could still draw. Lord Bathurst said that the capture of Paris was an embarrassment to the Allies: the Earl of Aberdeen argued that the French army could have maintained the war for an indefinite period. It is curious to find the Ministry magnifying, and the Opposition depreciating, the resources of Napoleon: to such inconsistencies are statesmen driven by the exigencies of party politics.

One or two interesting remarks on the campaign of Waterloo remain to be noticed. An officer, Colonel Hamilton, who saw Creevey on the night of June 16, "was full of admiration of the talent of Bonaparte in this daring attempt to get between the English and Prussian armies."² Miss Williams³ comments on the waste of life entailed by the "*en avant* system," which was "the secret of Bonaparte's reputation," and says that French officers were struck by Wellington's "avarice of blood." Boyce⁴ brings forward much the same idea, only in a far more impartial and reasonable manner. Comparing the

¹ This telling argument came from Lord Lansdowne. It is repeated by the *Quarterly*, July 1815, which comments on his error in 1813 in allowing so many of his veterans to be shut up in fortresses, especially as he himself used always to disregard fortresses in a campaign.

² Creevey, Vol. I. p. 230.

³ *Narrative*, p. 187.

⁴ *Second usurpation of Bonaparte*, Vol. II. p. 40.

tactics of the two generals, he says that Napoleon's plan was "simple and grand": it resembled our naval tactics: the whole weight of his force was directed on one point, either the weakest or the more dangerous. Whole divisions were sacrificed for that object. "Forward, forward," was his only reply to news of repulses. Hence came his unparalleled success. Wellington was a more defensive general, cautious, sparing of the blood of his soldiers, quick to detect the errors of opponents, and to take advantage of them. Napoleon's system was suitable to the character of French soldiers, who are capable only of active courage.

SECTION II

THE FRENCH ARMY

WE must now turn to the estimation in which these soldiers, Bonaparte's Janissaries as Miss Berry calls them, were held in England.

In the first place, their fighting power was greatly admired—save by such writers as "Publicola," author of the "Address to the Brave and Undaunted" etc., whose illuminating view is that "one Englishman would ever drive three Frenchmen before him." Mr. Hutchinson declared,¹ that "on the heights of Albuera the troops of the two most warlike nations of the earth never more distinguished themselves," and in 1815² Mr. F. Douglas insists on the necessity of destroying the French army in order to restore tranquillity: "their restless agitation, their unparalleled fearlessness of death and their unconquerable passion for glory," formed their excellence and their formidableness. Long before, Windham³ had emphasized the fact that the secret of French success lay in their morale. "They conquered because they thought they could conquer: 'Possunt quia posse videntur.'"

Even during the disastrous Saxon campaign "Vetus"⁴ confesses that the French army has

¹ *Parl. Debates*, June 7, 1811.

² *Ibid.* April 7, 1815.

³ *Speeches*, December 1806: Vol. III. p. 6.

⁴ *The Times*, August 13.

never been in a better state : the privates behave well at home and do not desert in the field. Their conduct at La Rothière in 1814 is equally praised by Sir Charles Stewart : " The legions still stick by Bonaparte : to do them justice, they fought well the other day." ¹ Still more important is the "reluctant" testimony given by Scott ² about the French wounded at Waterloo. " Though wounded, exhausted, beaten, you would still conclude with me that they were men capable of marching unopposed from the west of Europe to the east of Asia. Strong, thick-set, hardy veterans, brave spirits and unsubdued."

In the admitted fighting power of the French, the English saw only a terrible instrument in the hands of Bonaparte. Scott in his *Diary* quotes Joel, chap. ii, vers. 2-11, as applicable to their overwhelming and relentless advance into Spain in 1808.

Wordsworth considers it "frightful" to see "the prime of a vast nation propelled out of its territory with the rapid sweep of a horde of Tartars, moving from the impulse of like savage instincts" and furnished with civilized weapons.³ The *Edinburgh Review* for July 1808, after speaking of the advantages of Spain over, say, Austria, goes on to add : "To these advantages we must oppose the French Cabinet and the French army, an inexhaustible machine. This tremendous engine it is which we own does appal us." And to Englishmen one of the most dreadful features of this terrible machine

¹ Castlereagh, *Despatches*, etc., 3rd Series, Vol. I. p. 242.

² *Letters*, July 2, 1815 : Vol. III. p. 348.

³ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 162.

is its dependence on, and devotion to, its chief. In 1802 Coleridge¹ saw the importance of this when he wrote that Bonaparte's power rested on Militarism, but it must be remembered that the affections of the soldiery are largely moulded by those of the officers, and went on to ask the vital question, "How long will Bonaparte retain these, especially as he favours the armies of Italy and Egypt at the expense of the army of the Rhine?" The answer was found in the campaigns of the Grande Armée; and in January 1809 the *Edinburgh Review* is forced to confess the closeness of the interdependence between the instrument and its wielder. The present French officers, it says, are mainly sprung from the ranks: "Their whole fortune is staked on the sword; and their attachment is therefore necessarily secured under the auspicious influence of a leader whose indefatigable ambition occupies them in their favourite pursuits, and whose liberal *impartiality* feeds the hopes of preferment and divides the fruits of conquest."² (We may paraphrase this by the well-known phrase, "Every soldier carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack.") "*Equality*" in military as well as civil matters was an heirloom bequeathed by the Revolution to Napoleon. J. Scott, commenting on the fact that the name of the "fifer," Dubois, was inscribed on the column in the Place Vendôme, said that "this circumstance cannot be considered trifling, inasmuch as it is the indication of a system which gave room for the hopes of every individual

¹ *Essays on his own Times*, October 2 : Vol. II. p. 511.

² January 1809 : Vol. XIII. p. 452.

as to personal distinction, and thus assured to the state the full vigour of the people.”¹ Accordingly, Englishmen began to perceive that the French army, so devoted to Bonaparte, was really representative of France. The Marquis of Wellesley in 1815 said² that “its numbers gave it a vast superiority in influence, and it was besides intimately connected with France.” Thus, then, the French army was formidable in three ways: it was a fine fighting force, it was devoted to a single chief, it represented a powerful nation. Small wonder that Englishmen felt alarmed at it. It was left to the optimism of Wordsworth to point out its weakness.

In 1809 he maintains that the enormity of this force has in it nothing inherent or permanent. “Two signal defeats” would overthrow it.³ Up to a point Wordsworth is a true enough prophet. Russia and Leipsic were the “two signal defeats,” but he could not have foreseen so utter an overthrow as the former. It was not owing to any failure of the French fighting machine that Napoleon fell; in fact it showed a great recuperative power after the Russian campaign, and also, though to a smaller extent, after Leipsic.

¹ *Visit to Paris*, p. 72.

² *Parl. Debates*, April 12, 1815.

³ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 141.

SECTION III

GENERAL VIEW OF NAPOLEON'S GENIUS

ON the whole it may be said that Englishmen were thoroughly alive to the military genius of Napoleon. It is true that in 1809—the date is in itself a piece of irony—the author of the *Exposé* compares him unfavourably with the Archduke Charles; but wiser critics, however hostile in other respects, usually did justice to his talents in war. His military powers are well brought out by H. Scott: “His qualifications for the field are such as rarely unite in one man, such as vigour, coolness, penetration, acuteness and presence of mind—boldness in design, intrepidity in action, firmness, ability and perseverance.”

What struck observers most was his rapidity, his concentration of force on the decisive point, his relentless following up of a defeated foe. On the last point even Wordsworth concedes him praise. To add force to his denunciations of the hesitation of the British generals at Cintra, he contrasts the vigour with which Napoleon pursued a broken foe: “This is the example which the French ruler and his generals have given you at Ulm—at Lubeck—in Switzerland—over the whole plain of Prussia—everywhere—and this for the worst deeds of darkness: while yours was the noblest service of light.”¹

¹ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 127.

And to the two other dominant characteristics of Napoleonic warfare ample justice is done by another bitter enemy of Napoleon, that fine soldier, Lord Paget. He writes from Astorga on November 23, 1808,¹ about Blake's defeat at Espinosa by the French "with numbers inferior to his, but so managed that the French were *as usual*² always the strongest at the points of attack." And again : "These Devils" (*i. e.* the French) "will to a certainty carry all before them. They have manœuvred in this campaign precisely as I foretold. I gave them credit for the most rapid movements possible when they did begin, and they have made them, but I own I did expect a better defence on the part of the Spaniards."

Other characteristics of Napoleon's style of warfare are mentioned. Lord Porchester,³ speaking in Parliament *à propos* of the campaign of 1809, said : "To recruit an army after defeat, to repair the consequences of military reverses, has uniformly been the characteristic of great commanders from Frederick to Bonaparte." And in 1814 Wellington paid an honourable and ungrudging tribute to the moral strength which the presence of Napoleon gave to a French army. When Stadion remarked to him that he thought he (Wellington) had never met Bonaparte in person, he frankly replied : "No ! and I am very glad I never did. I would at any time have rather heard that a reinforcement of 40,000 men had joined the French army than that he had arrived to take command." Wellington

¹ *Paget Papers*, Vol. II. p. 384.

² *Italics are mine.*

³ *Parl. Debates*, January 26, 1810.

was, as usual, right. Without Napoleon, the French in the later wars of the Empire were quite ordinary troops, as witness Vittoria or the Katzbach.¹

Finally, the *Edinburgh Review*, in an admirable treatise (July 1821) on Jomini's art of war, sums up Napoleon's warlike genius in such a manner as to show that it was thoroughly understood and appreciated in England. First it speaks of his vigour: "Frederick began, and the mighty and creative genius of Napoleon completed the overthrow of that languid and ineffectual system, and unfolded and by unexampled efforts avouched the true principles of the destructive science." The same idea, we may note, is predominant in the great work of Clausewitz.

The *Review* then goes on to speak of Bonaparte's strategy. He was actuated by principles in war, and so his first campaign "was the period in which the principles of the military art were brought to all the perfection of which they appear to be capable." It then compares him favourably with Frederick, who was at his best in tactics, but was no great strategist. "Here it was that Napoleon incontestably surpassed all who preceded him, and left nothing in which he could himself be surpassed."

Concentration of force, we all know, was the root of the Napoleonic principle in war. "After all," he once remarked bitterly, "what is war? It is merely the concentration of superior force at the

¹ There were exceptions, notably the stand of the Bretons at La Fère Champenoise, and the desperate struggles of Soult's army against Wellington among the Pyrenees and at Toulouse.

decisive point." And again, "Victory goes to the big battalions." Our Edinburgh reviewer brings out this principle very clearly. "How often have we not heard his genius slighted, and his victories talked of as destitute of merit, because at the point of attack he was superior in number to his enemies? This very fact . . . contributes his greatest and truest praise. He generally took the field . . . inferior in total force to his opponents. But he so directed his attack as at once to divide his enemy, and to fall with the mass of his own forces upon a point where the division or the redistribution of the army left them unable to resist him." To see the truth of this criticism, we have only to recall the manœuvres of Millesimo and Montmirail. "He knew that everything depended ultimately on physical superiority; and his genius was shown in this, that, outnumbered on the whole, he was always superior to his enemies at the decisive point which it was the object of his manœuvres and his battles to secure." The "always" in this sentence is an exaggeration—Marengo, Austerlitz and Dresden are examples to the contrary—it would have been truer to say, "always had a larger proportion than his enemies at the decisive point," but the mistake shows that appreciation of Napoleon was almost excessive. These principles go far to explain Napoleon's victories; but there was yet another cause—the spirit of the offensive.¹ Our reviewer says that the

¹ *The Times*, 1812, remarks, *à propos* of the Borodino campaign: "To break the main army of his adversary has always been Bonaparte's first—we might almost say sole—object in war."

Republican generals, though they won victories, did not profit much by them: "Napoleon saw their failure, and, with the intuition of genius, discerned its cause. Like them he left his magazines, but instead of scattering his forces, he collected them into masses, guarding his frontier by forcing the enemy to look to his own preservation. His menaces were never vain. He often fought under the walls of the enemy's capital—isolated their forces, and dispersed or destroyed them in detail or intercepted their communications with their base, throwing them upon some insurmountable obstacle, and reducing them to a situation in which they had no hope but in the submission of their government." From this masterly *résumé* of Napoleonic warfare, summing up the principles of Napoleon's manœuvres from Millesimo to Ligny, it is clear that Englishmen could understand how it came to pass that "Napoleon swept over Europe like a storm, and nations stood aghast and stupefied at the vastness of his exploits and the inefficiency of their means of defence."

SECTION IV

WELLINGTON ON NAPOLEON

THERE is not much chivalry to be discerned in the relations of the modern Hector and Achilles, absolutely none, at any rate, on the side of Napoleon. The clause in his will by which he left a sum of money to the would-be murderer of Wellington is sufficient to show this. Wellington could afford to be more generous, but his character and principles were in every way opposed to those of Napoleon. He remarks on the lowness and pettiness of Napoleon's nature : " For my part I could see no magnanimity in a lie : and I confess that I think one who could play such tricks¹ but a shabby fellow." He " never believed in him, and always thought that in the long-run we should overthrow him. He never seemed himself at his ease, and even in the boldest things he did there was always a mixture of apprehension and meanness.² I used to call him ' Jonathan Wild the Great.' . . . But the truth was, he had no more care about what was right or wrong, just or unjust, honourable or dishonourable, than Jonathan, though his great abilities and the great stakes he played for threw the knavery into the shade." ³ Elsewhere he writes still more strongly :

¹ The " tricks " consisted of disposing fictitious sums of money to various people in his will.

² Cp. quotations from the *Quarterly* given on p. 286.

³ Croker, *Papers*, I. 340.

"Bonaparte's whole life, civil, political and military, was a fraud. There was not a transaction great or small in which lying and fraud were not introduced." He gives as instances Bonaparte's report of the expedition from Egypt to Syria, and his claiming a great victory at Preussich Eylau.¹

Nevertheless, Wellington is usually ready to do justice to Napoleon's military abilities. He could "hardly believe" the story of the latter's cowardice at Waterloo: "I think that even with ordinary men a great interest would overcome personal fear."²

He said he could not tell which was the greatest military genius, Marlborough or Napoleon: "I can hardly conceive anything greater," he told Lord Stanhope, "than Napoleon at the head of an army, especially a French army"; but added that he had one great advantage, "He had no responsibility—he could do whatever he pleased; and no man has ever lost more armies than he did."³ Again, when asked whether Napoleon was wholly indebted to his genius for his pre-eminence, and whether his marshals were so very inferior to him, he replied, "Oh yes—there was nothing like him. He suited a French army so exactly. Depend upon it, at the head of a French army there never was anything like him."⁴ It is curious that a man who himself inspired so little devotion, should thus have appreciated the magic of Napoleon's leadership.

Sometimes Wellington contrasts his own system of warfare with that of Napoleon in a complacent

¹ Croker, *Papers*, II. 287.

² *Ibid.* III. 272.

³ Stanhope, *Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, pp. 30-31.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 9.

but never conceited manner. Thus in strategy: "It was always his (Napoleon's) object to fight a great battle; my object, on the contrary, was in general to avoid to fight a great battle,"¹ he once said to Stanhope; and again, in tactics, Croker records his argument with the monarchs of Russia and Prussia on the superiority of his line over Bonaparte's column.² No one who has read the story of the battles in the Peninsula can doubt that Wellington was right, and that the excuse for their defeats put forward by Frederick and Alexander was weak.

We are not, however, so ready to agree with Wellington when he praises the French army at the expense of his own: not even in stature does he allow them any advantage over "Napoleon's French."³ He considered the French "most excellent troops," better in hand than ours and more capable of living on the country—in a French army you get fair samples of every class, owing to the conscription, whereas our men "have all enlisted for drink."⁴

Napoleon's genius he considered great, but marred by impatience. Thus when eulogizing the campaign of 1814, "Excellent—quite excellent. The study of it has given me a greater idea of his genius than any other," he proceeded: "Had he continued that system a little while longer, it is my opinion that he would have saved Paris. But he wanted patience—he did not see the necessity of adhering to defensive warfare."⁵ This impatience the Duke

¹ Stanhope, p. 113.

² Croker, III. 274.

³ Stanhope, p. 25.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 14.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 8.

considered the root of his failure in 1815. "He should have stood on the defensive, and we should then have had great difficulty in dealing with him."¹ But the French "would not trust him for defensive warfare, nor indeed was he fit for it."² He harks back to this theme several times, and mainly in connection with Waterloo.

Of course, it is with regard to the war in Spain that Wellington's criticisms of Napoleon's strategy have most weight. "Nothing was too great or too small for his proboscis," was his comment³ when Gurwood remarked on Napoleon's sending orders to single divisions in Spain from Paris, without reference to the immediate circumstances, and he went on to speak of Napoleon's preconceived ideas, especially in his later years, giving an instance told him by Marmont: "Napoleon would not recede from his first idea." Again, he criticized the loss of life in the French armies, due to neglect of regular subsistence—a true enough accusation, but one which was inherent in Napoleonic warfare. Wellington's method was that by which Napoleon's could be worn down, and that he himself perceived it is clear from his own words:⁴ "If you look through his (Napoleon's) campaigns, you will find that his plan was always to try to give a great battle, gain a great victory, patch up a peace, such a peace as might leave an opening for a future war, and then hurry back to Paris. This, I should say, was the great benefit of what we did in Spain. . . . We starved him out. We showed him that we

¹ Stanhope, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.* p. 98.

² *Ibid.* p. 31.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 101-2.

wouldn't let him fight a battle at first, except under disadvantages. If you do fight, we shall destroy you : if you do *not* fight, we shall destroy you still."

Napoleon's obligation to return to Paris as soon as possible he attributed to his precarious tenure of his throne. This made it impossible for him to winter at Moscow in 1812. Nevertheless the Duke thought that he would have succeeded in that campaign if he had wintered at Smolensk or Vitebsk.¹ Elsewhere² he brings up strong indictments against Napoleon's management of that campaign : accusing him of losing seven weeks in the advance to Moscow, of making a false movement in changing his line upon Minsk, and finally of indolence. "His personal proceedings previous to and during the battle of Borodino³ are inexplicable." The Duke suggests that he was more in awe of his marshals than was commonly supposed.

From this summary we may, I think, conclude that the Duke of Wellington, though not a generous, was not an unjust critic of his rival.

¹ Stanhope, p. 101.

² Croker, I. 338.

³ Napoleon thought this one of his best battles, but only apparently because it was fought so far away from home.

CHAPTER V
THE ENGLISH POETS ON
NAPOLEON

THE ENGLISH POETS ON NAPOLEON

THE epoch of the Revolution and the Empire, more particularly the latter, has high claims to be ranked as the great age of English poetry; Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Scott were then at the zenith, if not in all cases of their fame, at any rate of their genius. Keats and Shelley had already begun to write; and there were a host of less important figures, prominent amongst whom were Southey, Campbell and Moore. And after the fall of the Empire, the school of romantic poetry began to fade in its turn, and to give place to the new and less passionate style of the Victorians.

The influence of the Revolution on the romantic school is well known. It inspired Wordsworth with the sentiment of humanity, the idea of the dignity of man. Reaction against it drove Scott to praise and sing an old-world feudalism. Everywhere, it assisted poetry to cast off, sometimes involuntarily as in Byron's case, the conventional shackles of the eighteenth century.

The first question we must ask is, "Had the Empire any similar effect?" and to enable us to form any opinion on this, we must take the views of each poet, or set of poets, on the Empire, or rather on the Head of the Empire.

For the romantic poets did not belong to one school. In the first place, there were the "Lake

poets," Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey; secondly, Byron and Moore, whom we may perhaps call the "poets of Society"; thirdly, the martial poets, Scott and Campbell; finally, and least important from the present point of view, the younger poets, Keats and Shelley.

In the works of these writers we find that allusions to Napoleon are very various in quantity. Wordsworth, Southey, Scott and Byron devote whole poems to him; whereas in Shelley, Campbell, Moore and Coleridge there is nothing more than a few short stanzas or allusions—possibly the last-named exhausted his invective in his prose. Nor is it easy to find a common denominator for them: hostility to Napoleon does not cover them all, for Byron in the flights of his moody mind alternates between pity, admiration and a feeling almost akin to contempt, and Moore is distinctly favourable. Hence it is necessary to take them separately; we may start with the "Lake poets" as most characteristic of their age.

SECTION I

WORDSWORTH AND SOUTHEY

IN reality Wordsworth and Southey conceived very much the same opinion of Napoleon, as the foe to the liberties of nations, and to nationality, but in no way is the disproportion in intellectual and poetical stature between the two more marked than in their treatment of this great theme. It is hard to imagine any admirer of Napoleon who would not be thrilled by the "soul-animating strains" of Wordsworth's "Sonnets dedicated to National Independence and Liberty"; the most famous of all, "Two voices are there," is so merely as it embodies most of the characteristics of the rest. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine an opponent of Napoleon so bigoted as not, after wading through Southey, to feel a certain sympathy with his foe. While Wordsworth carries you away with him, Southey repels you. And again, Wordsworth, even in his most passionate moments, is discriminating, whereas Southey is blindly lavish in his abuse and praise. For example, he always regards England as "this happy isle," and can actually say of England :

" Till, when the Georges came,
Her happiest age began." ¹

The laudation of unworthy objects was due to the

¹ See Appendix F.

hatred of a certain class of Englishmen, of whom Southey was one, towards what they thought was the only alternative to the existing order of things. This hatred made them imagine the existing order as perfect. Wordsworth is far more candid. He can speak of the shortcomings of England, and *then* goes on to say :

“ But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
Far, far more abject is thine enemy,
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight :
Oh, grief ! that earth’s best hopes rest all with thee.” ¹

It took Wordsworth a long time to lose his faith in the French Revolution and to cease rejoicing at English defeats. He was first disillusioned by the plunder of Italy in 1797, and next by the treatment of Switzerland in 1798 ; but it was Bonaparte that finally decided him. It is clear that from the start he was hostile to Bonaparte. There could never be any true appreciation for mere conquest or political adroitness on the part of one who was ever prone to idealism ; or for Bonaparte’s orderly and despotic government from one who rejoiced in the prospect of individual liberty. For it is equally clear that his dislike was founded on the Whig idea of Bonaparte as the destroyer of liberty. In the third and fifth sonnets he contrasts the happiness of 1790, when “ the senselessness of joy was then sublime,” with the gloom of 1802, when he heard :

“ ‘ Good morrow, citizen,’ a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it.”

¹ “ Sonnets dedicated to National Independence and Liberty,” Part I. xxi,

And even earlier (1801) we can see his attitude towards Bonaparte in embryo when he asks what can be the tenderest mood of that man's mind, bred as he is camps, and goes on :

" Books, leisure, perfect freedom . . .
 . . . these are the degrees
 By which true sway doth mount." ¹

It is interesting to contrast this view with that of another Whig, though one of a widely different nature, in the person of Sheridan, who, though, it is true, only speaking of the military side, quotes the passage : ² " Cujus adolescentia ad scientiam rei militaris, non alienis preceptis sed suis imperiis ; non offensionibus belli sed victoriis ; non stipendiis sed triumphis, est traducta."

Even as early as 1802 Wordsworth's love of liberty impels him against the great despot, while his mind is loaded with a feeling akin to fear at the vastness of Bonaparte's military power. These sentiments are illustrated by the Sonnet (VIII) to Toussaint L'Ouverture :

" Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
 And love and man's unconquerable mind."

and Sonnet XI (September 1802) :

" I saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
 The coast of France, the coast of France how near,
 Drawn into almost frightful neighbourhood.
 I shrank."

To him Bonaparte was the successor of Robespierre, and to him as well as to Madame de Staël, it was

¹ Sonnet IV.

² *Speeches*, June 27, 1800 : Vol. V. p. 163.

"Robespierre on horseback," a far more terrible phenomenon. And so he turns to England, as a last resource, admitting her faults, but finding comfort in her solidity and strength; and appreciating as he did the present evils, he thought often of the past. "Milton, thou should'st be living at this hour;"¹ and again, "Great men have been among us;"² contrasting England in revolution with France in revolution, where there is "equally a want of books and men." And that in England he saw, not the presence of repression and misery, but the centuries of continuous glory is shown by the Sonnet³ beginning:

"It is not to be thought of that the flood
Of English freedom . . .," etc.

He contrasts her position as "a bulwark for the cause of men" with the unanimity of the French to destroy her liberty, and with their infatuation in preparing "fetters on their souls." It is small wonder then that Wordsworth feels a hatred for the man who has caused this zeal of the erstwhile lovers of liberty, to "put out the only light of liberty that yet remains on earth."⁴

We can trace what occupied his thoughts on his Scottish tour (1803). The Sonnet on Killiecrankie commemorates the triumph of undisciplined valour over those,

"Whom precept and the pedantry
Of dull mechanic battle do enslave."⁵

And when he writes of Rob Roy, he is thinking of

¹ XIV.

² XV.

³ XVI.

⁴ XVIII.

⁵ Was this a hit at the Austrians?

the greater and far more unscrupulous bandit,¹ Bonaparte. He says that Rob Roy lived an age *too soon* : had he lived now :

“ . . . to his sword he would have said,
 ‘ Do thou my sovereign will enact,
 From land to land through half the earth :
 Judge thou of law and fact.’ ”

In which case,

“ France would have then her present Boast,
 And we our own Rob Roy.”

But he suddenly stops himself, feeling that he is unjust to the Highlander :

“ for thou didst love
 The *Liberty* of man.”

Therefore in the 22nd Sonnet we have Bonaparte described as “ of men the meanest,” and his eminence is regarded as degrading the dignity of history :

“ The great events with which old story rings,
 Seem vain and hollow : I find nothing great,
 Nothing is left which I can venerate.”

The feeling of gloom which inspires this sonnet, though relieved by lofty patriotism as in “ Vanguard of liberty, ye men of Kent,” seems to be intensified as the years went on, and triumph after triumph seemed to prove the supremacy of the Napoleonic principle. Nevertheless he does not despair, and

¹ Cp. Carlyle's remark to the effect that Napoleon “ belonged to the brigand species.”

so typifies the feeling of many Englishmen of the period, admirably summed up in the Jena Sonnet : ¹

“ Another year, another deadly blow,
 Another mighty empire overthrown !
 And we are left or shall be left alone,
 The last that dare to struggle with the foe.
 Tis well ! from this day forward we shall know
 That in ourselves our safety must be sought.”

And yet Wordsworth's mind does not bow before the tremendous figure of Napoleon—he not only hates the idea of the military despotism of France, “ an armed creature,” whose panoply is “ the live scales of a portentous nature,” but the “ pollution ” which her sovereignty brings with it ; and to his mind the military principle, and the conscription which it was one of Bonaparte's main objects to introduce into the subject countries, was pollution.

It is not until Wordsworth begins to speak of the principle of nationality, the main theme of the second part of the Sonnets, that we really get to a more optimistic vein. We first come across it with regard to England about 1803-4, where he declares that no discipline and valour can withstand a people rising in their own land for liberty ; ² and even in February 1807 ³ he dared to prophesy the resurrection of Germany : “ High deeds, O Germans, are to come from you,” a hope blasted at Tilsit, but destined to be fulfilled in 1813. ⁴

¹ XXVII.

² XXIV.

³ Part II, Sonnet IV.

⁴ Cp. Horner, who on June 12, 1809, speaking of the accounts of the state of opinion in Germany, writes to Jeffrey : “ They are quite your politics and mine, and they will ultimately restore the civilization and independence of Europe ” (*Memoirs*, I. 465).

The war of 1809, an essentially *national* war, the only national war that Austria has ever waged, and the rising of Spain added fuel to this spark of hope. Above all, the Tyrolese, a mountain people, impressed his imagination; and it showed clear prescience on his part that he saw that the Napoleonic system could best be overthrown by nationality. And yet he regards the war of 1809 as a failure:

“The martial courage of a day is vain”¹ . . .

if kingdoms lack fortitude; and so, despite Aspern, Austria is conquered, and in the 21st Sonnet he speaks of the tremendous and lawless power of the “Adventurer” who has followed, reckless of right, wherever fortune led him. Nevertheless he does not yet despair:

“Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death;”²

and declares (1811):

“An accursed thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye.”³

It is consonant with Wordsworth’s character that there is no vulgar spirit of triumph visible in the concluding odes. The spirit that *does* breathe through them is: “Say not that we have vanquished but that we survive.”⁴

Wordsworth had no very clear conception of Bonaparte as a man—in his final summary of Bonaparte’s character, he lays stress on his lawlessness, “which, spurning God, had flung away remorse.”⁵

¹ Part II, XVIII.

² Part II, XXI.

³ Part II, XXXIII.

⁴ Thanksgiving Ode.

⁵ *Ibid.*

The complete difference between them in thought prevented any sort of appreciation. Napoleon despised men and treated them as pawns; Wordsworth never lost his faith in human nature. But Wordsworth had a clear idea of the Napoleonic system, and undoubtedly fixed on its weak points, its contempt for law and for the rights of nationality, as well as its antipathy to true liberty.

Coleridge, as we have said, alludes but rarely to Napoleon in his poems. His views are much the same as Wordsworth's, with the difference due to an hysterical, as contrasted with a manly character. A few lines are worth quoting :

“ But for Napoleon, know he'll scorn this calm :
The ruddy planet at his birth bare sway,
Sanguine adust his humour, and wild fire
His ruling element. Rage, revenge and cunning
Make up the temper of this captain's valour.”¹

Southey is one of those who hope to be heard for their much speaking. In an age which delighted in apostrophes and exaggerations, no doubt his wearisome iterations, his noisy denunciations were tolerated—nowadays they fall flat upon a more critical audience. Some phrases, picked at random, will illustrate the character of the abuse which he rolled forth on Napoleon : “ The perfidious Corsican ; ” “ But evil was his good ; ” “ Remorseless, godless, full of fraud and lies ; ” “ Hell's whole panoply ; ” “ His own wicked heart.”

To tell the truth, Southey, with characteristic modesty, considered himself as the moral leader and

¹ *Napoleon*, 1801.

teacher of his generation, and so with the conscientiousness more honourably typical of his character, he thought it his duty to pen these—as he no doubt thought them—tremendous philippics against Napoleon, who, as the advocate of the new system, was specially antagonistic to one who, as poet laureate, was formally enlisted to defend the old.

We do not find much that is original in Southey's view of Napoleon. He tells how "Kings like satraps waited round his throne," but only to contrast the firm attitude of Britain, who "alone fought the battles of mankind."¹ Nor is the gentle bard altogether free from ferocity. During the peace negotiations in January 1814 he calls loudly for vengeance "upon one accursed head," and in 1815 he seems almost to rejoice in the idea of a massacre of the French. Looking back retrospectively, he says that, after attaining the Empire, Bonaparte might have handed down a fair name :

"Fool ! should he cast away that bright renown :
Fool ! the redemption proffered should he lose."²

But this idea, which *is* worth remark, is found in a practically contemporary poem of Byron's, and so is probably not strikingly original.

The poem of Southey's which most fully elucidates his view of the character of Napoleon is *The Poet's Pilgrimage*. At Waterloo he, like Scott and most other Englishmen, exults in the praises of his countrymen. And in his triumph over the "man of blood"

¹ *Carmen Triumphale*, January 1814.

² Ode during negotiations, January 1814.

he exaggerates, as when he says that Wellington never trembled for the victory — Contrast Wellington's own remark, "I, who saw the battle lost four times" ¹ — and in his exultation he shows not the least sign of generosity. Speaking of the rout at Genappe, he writes :

"He who had bridged the Danube's affluent stream,
With all the unbroken Austrian power in sight,
(So had his empire vanished like a dream)
Was by this brook impeded in his flight."

"O ! wretch without the courage or the faith
To die with those whom he had led to death." ²

Finally, there ensues a long discussion between "the evil prophet" and Southey, the former voicing the materialistic creed and thus justifying Napoleon :

"Hath he not chosen well ?, the old man replied ;
Bravely he aimed at universal sway ;
And never earthly chief was glorified
Like this Napoleon in his prosperous day." ³

and Southey replying that even when Napoleon was at his zenith, he would not be in his place rather than in that of a Mina or a Hofer. Then the evil prophet, whom Southey regards as typical of the principles of the French Revolution, asks, in true Byronic manner, if France, Russia, Germany, Italy, Spain, are a whit the better for Napoleon's fall: Southey replies in lines which clearly mark his hatred for the liberticide :

¹ Croker (III, 372), however, denies that Wellington ever felt any alarm for the result.

² *The Poet's Pilgrimage ; The Field of Battle.*

³ *Ibid.*

“ The light had been extinguished—this, be sure,
 The first wise aim of conscious tyranny,
 Which knows it may not with the light endure ;
 But where light is not, Freedom cannot be ;
 Where Freedom is not, there no Virtue is ;
 Where Virtue is not, there no happiness.” ¹

He proceeds to discuss Napoleon and the Napoleonic empire—of tyrants, he says Napoleon is “ pre-eminently bad among the worst,” and goes on to elaborate the idea of this remarkable line. Napoleon’s errors came not from circumstances, but from his heart. His design was “ To enslave, degrade, and brutalize mankind.” ² Hence he would have restored “ the iron ages ” of military sway.

¹ *The Poet's Pilgrimage.*

² *Ibid.*

SECTION II

SCOTT AND BYRON

EVEN more fierce against Napoleon, though infinitely more genial and breezy, is Scott, the leader of another school. He is interesting as giving the High Tory view, whereas Wordsworth and even Southey were Whigs, turned against Napoleon by the latter's victory over liberty. Scott, on the other hand, dislikes Napoleon for his low birth; for Scott, though no one was less of a vulgar snob, had a feudal reverence for rank: "From a low isle, his lowlier lineage came,"¹ he writes, and this is the foundation of a hatred which extended to all the acts as well as to the person of Napoleon.

In his letters, as we have seen, there is much the same strain, with a chorus of *pereat iste*. Nevertheless, prejudiced as Scott is, his hatred for Napoleon is of a more manly type than that of, let us say, Coleridge; and in the two poems, *Don Roderick* and the *Field of Waterloo*, which deal with Napoleon, especially in the former, we can see the real vigour of his mind and verse.

His view of Napoleon was largely the "Attila view." He regards him as sent by Heaven to punish the sins of Europe, as "the fell scourge in

¹ *Don Roderick*, XXXIX.

the Almighty's hand," and believes that when his work is accomplished, he will fall :

"Gore-moistened trees shall perish in the bud,
And by a bloody death shall die the Man of Blood." ¹

Therefore his view of Napoleon is one of unrelieved blackness. Herein he differs from Campbell, who writes :

"I love contemplating—apart
From all his homicidal glory—
The traits that soften to our heart
Napoleon's story." ²

And even from Southey, who, speaking of the death of Mackinnon, Napoleon's school-fellow, says :

"It is said Bonaparte grieved at his death ;
If aught it may avail him, be that thought,
That brief recurrence of humanity,
In his hard heart remembered in his hour." ³

But Scott makes no concessions, though, on the other hand, he deliberately refrains from "Ultra-writing," of which he disapproved. Thus does he portray Napoleon's character :

"An iron crown his anxious forehead bore,
And well such diadem his heart became ;
Who ne'er his purpose for remorse gave o'er,
Or checked his course for piety or shame ;
Who, trained a soldier, deemed a soldier's fame
Might flourish in the wreath of battles won,
Though neither truth nor honour decked his name ;
Who, placed by fortune on a Monarch's throne,
Recked not of Monarch's faith or Mercy's kingly
throne." ⁴

¹ *Don Roderick*, XLII. ² *The British Sailor*, Stanza 1.

³ Inscription to Mackinnon. ⁴ *Don Roderick*, XXXVIII.

So much for Napoleon's general public character nor is Scott more favourable to his private nature. He crowned Joseph, that "wan fraternal shade."

"Not that he loved him—no ! in one man's weal,
Scarce in his own, e'er joyed that sullen heart." ¹

Above all, it is his ambition which is marked out for invective. Bonaparte treads down everything that stands in his path; "Realms could not glut his pride, blood could not slake." Ambition is no longer merciful as it was with Cæsar, nor generous as it was with Alexander.

"No seemly veil her modern minion asked;
He saw her hideous face and loved the fiend
unmasked." ²

Even Napoleon's genius is not allowed to pass unchallenged. In a footnote to the *Field of Waterloo* Scott comments on "the characteristic obstinacy of Napoleon," who "would listen to no advice and allow of no obstacles." His remarks bear out the justice of Byron's words :

"Had Bonaparte won at Waterloo,
It had been firmness—now 'tis pertinacity." ³

And again, Scott holds the view, fairly common in England, that Napoleon, powerful in prosperity, was resourceless in adversity, and that he owed his success largely to the French Revolution; the fine verse in which this thought is expressed must not blind us to the narrowness which did not appreciate the campaign of 1814 and the victories of Montmirail and Montereau.

¹ *Don Roderick*, XLIII.

² *Ibid.*, XLI.

³ *Don Juan*, Canto XIV, Stanza 90.

" And art thou he of Lodi's Bridge,
 Marengo's plain and Wagram's ridge,
 Or is thy soul like mountain-tide
 That, swelled by winter storm and shower,
 Rolls down in turbulence of power
 A torrent, fierce and wide?
 Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,
 Shrinking unnoticed, mean and poor,
 Whose channel shows displayed
 The wrecks of its impetuous course,
 But not one symptom of the force
 By which these wrecks were made." ¹

It is a pity that Scott, by nature a man of generosity, should be ungenerous to the fallen Emperor :

" Come, howsoe'er, but do not hide
 Close in thy heart that germ of pride ;" ²

and his recommendation to Napoleon to practise the virtues at St. Helena seems rather ludicrous to modern ears. Nevertheless Scott's view, as the view not only of a great author and personality, but of a champion of feudalism against " the armed champion of democracy," and a champion of England against France, is always entitled to consideration, if not in all cases to approbation.

From Lord Byron we should expect a wholly different view. In fact, it would be in complete accord with his character if he was an out-and-out admirer of Napoleon, of the Hazlitt type. For one thing, greatness and grandeur in any form always appealed to him, and, again, Napoleon's enemies were Byron's enemies. The hatred, the indecent venom with which he attacks " carotid-artery-

¹ *Field of Waterloo*, Stanza XIV.

² *Ibid.* XVII.

cutting Castlereagh," his satire on Alexander and on Metternich, would lead one to suspect in him an advocate of their great enemy. And further, Byron always tried to consider himself above public opinion; this would be yet another incentive to defend a man whom the almost unanimous voice of England was condemning. That he did not do so is probably due to the fact that in his love of liberty and in his hatred, or vaunted hatred, of kings, he included Napoleon among the latter (as indeed do Cobbett and Shelley, as against Hobhouse, who regarded him as the champion of peoples as against kings :

" But thou, forsooth, must be a king
And don the purple vest,
As if that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast." ¹

Also he regards Napoleon's autocracy as setting an evil model for monarchs :

" Kings, rejoicing in their late escape
From chains, would gladly be their tyrant's ape ; " ²

and he views the war of liberation as one aimed against all despotism :

" Did nations combat to make one submit,
Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty ? " ³

It was on this view that Byron insisted, whereas Metternich and the other statesmen of the Holy Alliance persisted in ignoring it. Hence that piece of solemn fooling is duly satirized by Byron as :

¹ *Ode to Napoleon*, XVIII.

² *Age of Bronze*, IV.

³ *Childe Harold*, III. 19.

“ A pious unity—in purpose one
To melt three fools to a Napoleon.” ¹

Closely connected with this feeling is Byron's passion for liberty—he is outraged by the attack on Spanish nationality.

“ To swell one bloated chief's unwholesome reign.” ²

We may fairly balance Byron's hatred of Napoleon as a tyrant with his hatred of the Holy Alliance as continuing tyranny, and the result is, that from a man of extreme and often prejudiced mind, we get on the whole a fair and moderately impartial view of Napoleon—on the whole, for there are fluctuations in Byron's views. A good example of his inconsistency may be noted :

In Canto IV of *Childe Harold* ³ he compares Cæsar and Napoleon :

“ A kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal ; for the Roman mind
Was modelled in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold
And an immortal instinct which redeemed ; ”

whereas in the *Age of Bronze* ⁴ he gives the preference to Napoleon :

“ Thou Rome who saw'st thy Cæsar's deeds outdone.”

There are three stages in which Byron's opinion of the Emperor are successively modified. As was the case with many other people, even Scott, it becomes more mellow as time elapses from Napoleon's

¹ *Age of Bronze*, VIII.

² *Childe Harold*, III. 53.

³ IV. 90.

⁴ V.

fall. The first stage is that previous to Waterloo, the period of the *Ode on the Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte*, and the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*: in these poems he is very bitter. The second, in which he wrote the third canto of *Childe Harold*, is marked by a more judicial and unprejudiced attitude, possibly due to Hobhouse's *Letters from Paris*, which were addressed to him. In the third he has lost all patience with the Holy Alliance, and his *Age of Bronze* is so hostile to them as to be in some places quite favourable to Napoleon, though in the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* we notice a relapse to bitterness, perhaps due to the embitterment of Byron's own mind.

Events can never be properly weighed at the time at which they take place. The first cantos of *Childe Harold* were written while the memory of the Bayonne treachery was still present in Englishmen's minds and the Peninsular War was still hanging in the balance :

“ How many a doubtful day shall sink in night
Ere the Frank robber turn him from his spoil ; ” ¹

while Albuera, “lavish of the dead,” and “all the wonders of Barossa fight” seemed to have accomplished nothing. Hence he regards Napoleon as the giant god of war, dealing out death to mortals and rejoicing in slaughter, or as the Scourger of the world.

Speaking of Talavera he writes :

“ For on this morn three potent nations meet
To shed before his shrine the blood he deems most
sweet ; ” ²

¹ *Childe Harold*, I. 90.

² *Ibid.* I. 39.

and again, he wrote the *Ode on the Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte* under the inspiration of great popular rejoicing in which almost all Englishmen shared. So in his exultation he writes :

“ The Desolator desolate,
The Victôr overthrown,
The Arbiter of others’ fate
A Suppliant for his own.” ¹

Throughout Byron’s poems, it may be noted, there runs a strong feeling of the contrast between Napoleon in his greatness and Napoleon in his ruin. But as yet we see little trace of pity for fallen grandeur. Instead, Byron lays stress on Napoleon preferring to live after his fall rather than to put an end to his existence :

“ Is it some yet imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope,
Or dread of death alone ?
To die a prince—or live a slave—
Thy choice is most ignobly brave.” ²

We must remember that at this time people were saying that they hoped to see “ Bonaparte die a mean dastard,” and Scott was declaring, “ I never thought nor imagined that he would have given in as he has done,” and comparing him unfavourably with Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sahib.³

So even Byron despises him, and we can gauge how far Byron was carried away by the spirit of the time when we find him in agreement with Southey and others in maintaining that, had Bona-

¹ *Ode to Napoleon*, V.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Letters*, June 17, 1814 : Vol. III. p. 118.

parte resigned his immeasurable power, it would have brought him more fame than Marengo, and in comparing him unfavourably with Washington. And therefore, like many Whigs at that date, notably the contributors to the *Edinburgh Review*, he points out the lesson given to ambition by Napoleon's career and fall :

“ Ill-minded man ! why scourge thy kind
 Who bowed so low the knee ?
 By gazing on thyself grown blind
 Thou taught'st the rest to see ;
 With might unquestioned—power to save,
 Thine only gift hath been the grave
 To those that worshipped thee ;
 Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
 Ambition's less than littleness.” ¹

“ Thanks for that lesson,” continues Byron. Men will no longer adore “ Pagod things of sabre sway,” and later on he writes in the same strain :

“ If thou hadst died as Honour dies,
 Some new Napoleon might arise
 To shame the world again.
 But who would soar the solar height
 To set in such a starless night ? ” ²

For the greater part of this fine poem Byron continues to regard Napoleon as the mere War-God, the representative of elemental power, whose whole being was centred in warfare, whose sway was that of the sabre :

“ The triumph and the vanity,
 The rapture of the strife—
 The earthquake voice of Victory,
 To thee the breath of life.” ³

¹ *Ode to Napoleon*, II.

² *Ibid.* XI.

³ *Ibid.* IV.

But towards the close there comes another idea. Byron gets a glimpse of Napoleon as "the world's conqueror and the world's exile," just as Hegel saw him before Jena ("I saw that world-soul, the Emperor"), and first introduces that comparison of Napoleon with Prometheus which he was to familiarize :

" Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock,
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock ? " ¹

though at the same time this feeling is tempered by the predominant idea of the poem :

" He " (*i. e.* Prometheus) " in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died."

The return from Elba is merely celebrated in a trifling quatrain, and we must now turn to the second stage of Byron's opinion of Napoleon, that of 1816.

In *Childe Harold*, Canto III, stanzas 17-42, we have perhaps the finest delineation of Bonaparte's character that has yet been written. It shows above all how well fitted was Byron's mind to understand Napoleon, and it is wonderful to see how Byron, in such an age of prejudice, can with unerring eye pick out the grandeur and the weakness of Napoleon. The passage starts with the splendid line :

" Stop ! for thy tread is on an empire's dust ; "

which alone would show how far he was from sharing the vulgar English contempt for the parvenu

¹ *Ode to Napoleon*, XVI.

Empire. Then we once more come across the Prometheus idea :

“ Ambition’s life and labours were in vain ;
He wears the shattered links of the world’s broken
chain ; ”

an idea repeated in the line :

“ Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou.”

Then in magnificent verse he described the character of “ the greatest, nor the worst of men.” Even were the matter less convincingly true, the rhythm and the phraseology would carry us away. At once he strikes the keynote of Napoleon’s character, the trait which raised him to the throne, and which drove him on to Moscow :

“ Extreme in all things ! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been now or never been :
For daring made thy rise as fall . . . ”

A second characteristic of Napoleon, his megalomania, is finely brought out in stanza 37. Fame, says Byron, flattered the Emperor :

“ Till thou wert
A god unto thyself ; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deemed thee for a time whate’er thou didst
assert.”

Here Byron understands not only a dominant trait in his character, but the very trait which led him to his ruin. And this suggests another failing closely connected with the preceding. Thou could’st command empires, he writes :

" But govern not thy pettiest passion : nor,
 However firmly in men's spirits skilled,
 Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
 Nor learn that tempted fate will leave the loftiest star."

Napoleon's lack of restraint indeed is well known, and so is his curious, almost fatalistic, belief in his star. But in the next stanzas we come across a more subtle piece of delineation, all the more remarkable in that it might be applied with complete appositeness to Byron himself. He speaks of Napoleon's contempt for mankind—and that he is here on firm ground is proved by many an anecdote of Napoleon. (" What are the lives of half a million to a man like me ? "), and by the remark of an English visitor to Paris in 1802 (" Bonaparte shuns flattery "). Characteristically Byron approves of this trait, but qualifies it thus :

" 'Twere wise to feel, not so
 To ever wear it on thy lip and brow,
 And spurn the instruments thou wert to use,
 Till they were turned unto thine overthrow."

Such conduct, says Byron, would have been right hadst thou been Diogenes rather than Alexander :

" But men's thoughts were the steps that paved thy
 throne,
 Their admiration thy best weapon shone ;" ¹
 For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den."

¹ Compare Coleridge (*Essays*, December 21, 1809, Vol. II. p. 646), to the effect that his main strength " is in the imaginations of men, which are dazzled and blinded by the splendid robes and trappings purchased by guilt for its own disguise," and again (September 17, 1811: Vol. II.

Napoleon, we may add in passing, was aware of this fact himself. His bulletins of victory were always contrived so as to produce most effect, and he now and again sacrificed what was militarily sound to what was theatrical and spectacular, notably at the famous forcing of the Somosierra, where he threw away the lives of fifty Polish horsemen to adorn a bulletin.

Finally, Byron speaks of his restless and immoderate ambition :

“ But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane.”

In the fourth canto he speaks with more contempt of Napoleon, still, however, regarding his character as a whole in the same light, though looking more at the shadows cast by his foibles than at the glory of his greatness. For example :

“ One vain man, who is not in the grave,
But, vanquished by himself, to his own slaves a slave.”¹

and—

“ The fool of false dominion.”

with—

“ But one weakest weakness, vanity :

Coquettish in ambition, still he aimed—

At what ? Can he avouch or answer what he claimed ? ”²

and as one who “ would be all or nothing.”

p. 915), “ Spite of armies, his greatest stronghold is and has ever been the superstition of infallibility, the Prestige de Bonaparte et de sa Fortune.”

¹ *Childe Harold*, IV. 89.

² *Ibid.* 91.

The *Age of Bronze* is a satire on

“The Czar,
The Autocrat of waltzes and of war,”

and his satellites : it is very fierce upon kings, and so in it we see Hazlitt's conception of Napoleon as the conqueror of kings brought prominently forward :

“But where is he, the modern, mightier far,
Who, born no king, made monarchs draw his car?”

and yet he cannot forget, as Hazlitt almost did, that Napoleon himself became one of the hated band, and allied himself by marriage with the most detested of all, the Hapsburgs :

“Thou Rome, who saw'st thy Cæsar's deeds outdone !
Alas ! why passed he too the Rubicon—
The Rubicon of man's awakened rights,
To herd with vulgar kings and parasites ?”

and—

“A single step into the right had made
This man the Washington of worlds betrayed :
A single step into the wrong has given
His name a doubt to all the winds of heaven ;
The reed of Fortune, and of thrones the rod,
Of Fame the Moloch or the demigod,
His country's Cæsar, Europe's Hannibal,
Without their decent dignity of fall. . . .
The kings of kings, and yet of slaves the slave,
Who burst the chains of millions to renew
The very fetters which his arm broke through,
And crushed the rights of Europe and his own,
To flit between a dungeon and a throne.”

Nevertheless his hatred of Napoleon's conquerors is so great that when he speaks of the glories of the

Empire, he forcibly contrasts it with the weakness of those who overthrew it.

So after hailing the Alps, Egypt and Spain as witnesses of Napoleon's triumphant career, he thus writes of Austria :

“ Austria ! which saw thy twice ta'en capital
Twice spared to be the traitress of his fall.”

He is no less hard on Prussia :

“ Ye race of Fredericks, Fredericks but in name
And falsehood—heirs to all except his fame,
Who, crushed at Jena, crouched at Berlin, fell
First, and but rose to follow.”

The disasters of the 1813 campaign and the failure of that of 1814 he ascribes to treachery rather than to any merit on the part of the Allies. At Leipsic :

“ The Saxon jackal leaves the lion's side
To turn the bear's and wolf's and fox's guide.”

And in 1814 :

“ Treason still
His only victor.”

And even his idea of Waterloo is vitiated by his hostility to the reactionary Wellington :

“ O bloody and most bootless Waterloo !
Which proves how fools can have their fortune too,
Won half by blunder, half by treachery.”

But in this poem there is more than an attack on the Holy Alliance. There are two views of Napoleon in it, one contemptuous, the other exactly the reverse. Byron had a keen eye for the ludicrous and a pen of bitter satire. Further, in Napoleon he saw not only

greatness, but greatness fallen; and for its fall he despised it. Hear how he speaks of St. Helena :

“ Smile to survey the queller of the nations
Now daily squabbling o’er disputed rations;
The paltry gaoler and the prying spy,
The staring stranger with his notebook nigh; ”

and of the service Napoleon did to the agricultural interest :

“ He was your great Triptolemus; his vices
Destroyed but realms and still maintained your
prices.”¹

In *Don Juan* also ² we can see the same vein of irony in dealing with Napoleon :

“ ’Tis the same landscape which the modern Mars saw
Who marched to Moscow, led by Fame, the siren,
To lose by one month’s frost some twenty years
Of conquest and his guard of grenadiers.

Let this not seem an anti-climax : ‘ Oh !
My Guard, my old Guard ! ’ exclaimed that god of
clay.”

But this is not the note which prevails in the *Age of Bronze*. There is pity mixed with contempt when he speaks of St. Helena; there is pure pity when he writes of Napoleon’s son as “ the young Astyanax of modern Troy; ” there is indignation at the infidelity of Marie Louise, who “ shared a sway surpassing that of Charlemagne.”

¹ An idea which recurs in *Don Juan*, IX. 32 :

“ And farmers can’t raise Ceres from her fall;
She fell with Bonaparte; what strange thoughts
Arise, when we see Emperors fall with oats.”

² Canto X, Stanzas 58–9.

The Prometheus idea comes out again more strongly and sympathetically :

“ Hear, hear Prometheus from his rock appeal
To earth, air, ocean, all that felt or feel
His power and glory.”

And at times Byron seems carried away by his grandeur :

“ Oh heaven ! of which he was in power a feature ;
Oh earth ! of which he was a noble creature.”

And yet he is sensible of the futility of it all, and the following lines are completely typical of the Byronic view of Napoleon :

“ Yes, where is he, the champion and the child
Of all that's great or little, wise or wild,
Whose game was empires and whose stakes were
thrones,
Whose table earth, whose dice were human bones?
Behold the grand result in yon lone isle.”

There are very few allusions to Napoleon in Moore : In a stanza “ to Lady Holland ” he describes Napoleon at St. Helena as “ the dying hero ” : and a short poem, commencing :

“ Sir Hudson Lowe, Sir Hudson Lowe,
By name, and, ah ! by nature so,”

contains a pun to the effect that, before, Gulliver was overcome by a nap, now Nap. is overcome by the Lilliputians. It is probable that Moore took up the support of Napoleon as a pose, and we need hardly rank him among Napoleon's admirers : he had a generous Irish heart, and probably very little real knowledge of affairs at St. Helena.

SECTION III

SHELLEY AND OTHERS

SHELLEY is surprisingly bitter against Napoleon : his hostility pursued him even in the grave. Shelley had a very considerable capacity for hatred : most existing institutions, and almost all contemporary politicians incurred his wrath. But, on the other hand, he merged the hatred of the men in the hatred of the things : so it appears that though he took a great interest in the affairs of the world, Napoleon did not fill a large place in his thoughts, and in fact, there are only two poems, and those short ones, which deal with this subject. From them it is clear that, much as Shelley hated Napoleon as a liberticide, he hated him much more as the author of war. To a pacific idealist like Shelley, the levelling military despotism was utterly repellent, none the less so on account of its vastness and splendour, which so appealed to Byron. The first of these pieces, the Sonnet called "Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte," was written in 1815. He begins :

" I hated thee, fallen Tyrant ! I did groan
To think that a most unambitious slave ¹
Like thou, should dance and revel on the grave
Of Liberty."

¹ What a phrase for Napoleon

Here we see his hatred of the Liberticide : and he naturally proceeds to the idea which we have noticed before in Southey and Byron (*cp.* the passages cited above : "Alas ! why passed he too the Rubicon ? " and " A single step into the right had made "), and continues :

" Thou might'st have built thy throne
Where it had stood even now ; thou didst prefer
A frail and bloody pomp which time has swept
In fragments towards oblivion ; "

and yet he cannot help seeing that Bonaparte was also an enemy to much that was evil. He ends with the confession :

" I know
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than Force or Fraud : old Custom, Legal Crime,
And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of Time."

The other poem, " Lines on hearing the news of the death of Napoleon," commences :

" What ! alive and so bold, O Earth ? "

and goes on to ask :

" Are not the limbs still, when the ghost is fled ?
And can'st thou move, Napoleon being dead ?
Thou wert warming thy fingers old
On the embers covered and cold
Of that most fiery spirit when it fled—
What, Mother, dost thou laugh, now he is dead ? "

This gives the idea of Napoleon as the world-soul, an idea to which even his bitterest enemies had at times to give way. And it also gives the idea of

the all-pervading character of the Emperor. But that this is not really Shelley's view is clear enough from Earth's reply. She scornfully says that she feeds on all humanity alike, and finally concludes :

“ Ay, alive and still bold, muttered Earth,
 Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled
 In terror and blood and gold,
 A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
 Leave the millions who follow to mould
 The metal before it be cold ;
 And weave into his shame, which like the dead
 Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.”

This is a disappointing piece, unworthy of its author.

Shelley's hatred to Napoleon as the causer of wars would not have been understood by Campbell, who, apparently without any strong hostility to Napoleon, shared with Scott the honour of being the Tyrtæus of England during these wars. But allusions to Napoleon are few and far between, as they also are in Keats. That gentle and romantic poet does not mention him at all in his poems, but there are one or two interesting remarks about him in the letters. He said ¹ that Napoleon did more harm than good to the cause of liberty, as he taught the “ divine-right gentlemen ” to keep up enormous standing armies. In the same letter ² he remarks : “ There are two tempers of mind in which we judge of things ; the worldly, theatrical and pantomimical ; and the unearthly, spiritual and ethereal. In the former Bonaparte, Lord Byron . . . hold the first place in our minds ; in the latter John Howard, Bishop Hooker rocking his child's cradle . . . ”

¹ *Letters*, Vol. I. p. 182.

² *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 181.

The only remaining piece of poetry which merits attention—for we can leave out such efforts as Dr. Syntax's poem on Napoleon in fifteen cantos—is one produced in 1821, from the pen of a Scotsman from Craignestock, entitled "Elegiac Effusion on the Death of Napoleon." ¹ It cannot claim consideration for any intrinsic poetic merit. The style, though fairly vigorous, is involved, and at times the stanzas are quite unintelligible. The poem abounds in stock epithets, and in the dreary old phrases, such as "Gallia" for France, etc. Nor is it remarkable for any great originality of thought; for most of its ideas appear in other and earlier poets. But some merit may be found in the judicial and impartial view which it presents. It appears to sum up many different opinions, and in fact represents more or less the view of future generations. The writer is a Liberal, though in his preface he deprecates "radical revolutionary measures."

In the first place we have the view of Napoleon as the "very god of war" (to use Clausewitz's expression).

"Then in what strains portray thy memory,
 What timid muse recall thy dreaded name?
 Or dare, inapt, to trace thy destiny
 Allied alike to terror and to Fame?
 Whether the universal friend or foe
 Of humankind thou vauntedst proud to be,
 Yet Desolation and War's bitterest woe
 Thy maddening tact still followed furiously."

Then in one verse we get opposed the two chief views of Napoleon—one, the "Attila view," and

¹ G. Pamph. 1584, 8 in Bodleian.

the other, Hazlitt's view that Napoleon was the remover of abuses :

“ Wert thou a scourge by sufferance high decreed
O'er Europe's bourne to sweep thy dreaded sway;
Or haply superstition down to tread,
And stern tyrannic power's imperious sway?”

Then we come across the typical Whig view. Napoleon's later wars were “ marked with wrong and crime.” On the other hand, the poet comments on the treachery of Napoleon's enemies; and his Liberalism appears in his sympathy with the dawn of independence in France at the time of the French Revolution against “ despotic Austria's hated power, and the foul murd'ress of the rugged North,” and from this he naturally enough proceeds to the idea of Bonaparte, the liberticide, and the tyranny of the Empire which still nominally kept the watch-words “ *Liberté, Égalité.*”

“ And oft, though Liberty in thy proud train
Might by short gleams in strangeful guise appear,
Yet thy stern frown made her fond visits vain,
And chilled her beating breast with tremulous fear.”¹

And he expands to some length the idea which we have already observed in Byron, Southey and Shelley, the feeling of regret that the Empire was ever established. The poet's unfulfilled hope was that :

“ . . . thou by fickle Fortune, warrior made,
But seeming called by higher Destiny,
To arms devote, should'st wield fair Freedom's blade,
And renovating vine-clad Gallia free.”

¹ Compare Chapter II. section 6, p. 131.

The shocking versification of the last line must not blind us to the excellence of the matter in the stanza. But the poet goes further. Hadst thou been wise in council, he continues, and not marred France's hopes by "maddening violence,"

"Then might success thy proud and valorous name
Have in immortal story long enrolled :
And given thy illustrious deeds to deathless fame,
As Conqueror great, high-destined and high-souled."

Like "bold Columbian Washington"—note how often he is favourably contrasted with Bonaparte—

"Thou hadst been a world's deliverer and pride."

But in conclusion the poet says that Napoleon's death is such as to awaken regret, and pities his lot at St. Helena, for which there will be a stain on England :

"Condemned by prosperous power and public strife."

And again :

"O victim of harsh rivalry and hate!"

This poem contains a typical poetic view of Napoleon, and embodies much of what is true and what is romantic in his career. It shows that there *was* an enlightened view of Napoleon in England, which was steadily on the increase from 1815-21, while the terror he inspired was becoming a mere memory, and the conduct of his conquerors was becoming daily more unpopular. It was but natural that there should be some reaction from the exaggerated hatred which was felt towards him in 1814 and 1815.

CHAPTER VI

NAPOLEON'S PERSONAL CHARACTER
AND PLACE IN HISTORY

NAPOLEON'S PERSONAL CHARACTER AND PLACE IN HISTORY

IN his first "Letter from Paris" in 1815, Hobhouse deals with the opinions of the British public about Napoleon, which he contrasts with the liberality of the views of the army.¹ He derides the terms applied to him, *e.g.* "the Enemy of the human race," and laughs at "those theologians who by astounding mathematical calculations have proved him to be the 'Horned Beast' of the Apocalypse," and at the alacrity with which Englishmen took up the cudgels on behalf of their former Antichrist, the Pope, because he was an enemy to Napoleon. He then proceeds to describe two views of Napoleon, the first ultra-hostile, the second (his own) favourable. Englishmen, he says, depicted him as an Attila hideous beyond his prototype ; they considered it a mark of patriotism to believe, in spite of all proofs to the contrary, in all Bonaparte's assassinations, poisonings, etc. ; nor were they content with him as vicious beyond belief : they called him fool and coward to prevent any one admiring him, and "to deepen the reprobation already attached to those who saw in Napoleon

¹ This is probably true. We have only to remember Napier's History. At Waterloo, after repeated French charges, an officer of the Suffolks said, "These fellows deserve Bonaparte;" and Lord Teignmouth, in his *Reminiscences of Many Years*, speaks (p. 72) of a Major Churchill who had "a boundless admiration for Bonaparte."

a fortunate soldier—of no less capacity than inclination for conquest and dominion, undaunted, persevering, unsatisfied, with most of the vices and virtues of conquerors, comparable to any of the great names of history by his exploits, inferior to some of them by the failings which a contemporary view enables us to see, and prompts us to condemn, superior to most of them as being untarnished by those monstrous deeds which characterized the age or habits of other heroes.” He goes on to describe another view—that of the midshipman of the *Undaunted*—which saw in Napoleon “a very ordinary man.” He was considered as “daring, good-natured and vain,” an idea which led to the contradiction that he was at once the weakest and most dangerous being in existence; the most insignificant and the most to be dreaded of mortals. The prevalence of this view after Napoleon’s fall he attributes to Sir Neil Campbell, who, he says, must have been disappointed to find that Napoleon lacked the “kingly characteristics of being haughty, morose, reserved, important and pompous.”

This is true enough as far as it goes; but there are certain diversities in the unfavourable view of Bonaparte. On the one hand, he was considered as a vulgar tyrant, a view for which Lord Whitworth was largely responsible; on the other, almost as a Juggernaut rolling over the lives of men: and the first of these two views must be again subdivided; some, *e. g.* Wordsworth, considered him as a barbarian destroyer, others, *e. g.* *The Times*, as a mere charlatan. The chief common factor in all these views was hatred,

hatred on the part of the Tories because he overthrew "the ancient social system:" still deeper hatred on the part of the Whigs because, as a despot, he had disappointed their hopes. The "Man in the Street" also hated him because he was the enemy, and the most formidable enemy of England; and his dislike was probably quickened in the later stages of the war by financial pressure.

Another important common factor to these views was the idea of Bonaparte's insatiable ambition. To that ambition they attributed his fall. In 1815 we find Ponsonby,¹ one of the Opposition, declaring that the previous year Bonaparte had lost his power by "the immeasurable extravagance, by the blind insanity of his ambitions" and by "the intoxication of success which led him to Moscow." This ambition was usually regarded as purely selfish, utterly callous, absolutely unscrupulous; and even his admirers had to admit its existence, though until 1808, a great year of disillusionment, they considered it tempered by prudence. They were probably right: it was not until after Friedland, or at any rate after Austerlitz, that Bonaparte became obsessed by megalomania and a blind confidence in his star. Similar phenomena are observable in other great conquerors. We have only to remember Alexander at the Shrine of Ammon.² This being so, Whitbread,

¹ *Parl. Debates*, April 20.

² This was remarked on by J. Scott (*Visit to Paris: Introduction*, p. xxxi.). Bonaparte, he said, fancied himself to be playing the Alexander, the Cæsar, etc.—an idea which, in Scott's estimation, "throws him among the fraternity of coxcombs."

who in 1813-14-15, in company with other admirers of Napoleon, has to speak of his "folly," "madness," "blind infatuation," in February 1808¹ is able to declare that if Bonaparte is a man of immoderate ambition, he (Whitbread) has no fear of his success. He is then merely like Louis XIV., and goes on to add: "That Bonaparte's ambition is great, nobody can doubt; but it is an ambition much under the guidance of prudence. He never fails to take every precaution for his security. He never proceeds without knowing in case of reverse how he is to retire; and his ambition has never yet, as far as I can observe, tempted him to go much beyond his interest."

Inspired by hatred, the enemies of Napoleon built their estimates on this foundation, *i. e.* the idea of insatiable ambition; but the worst crime that they laid to his charge was unconnected with ambition. This crime has so great an influence on the English judgment of Napoleon, overshadowing as it does even his selfishness, his perfidy and his savagery, that, before we can examine the various degrees of hatred which he excited, we must discuss its influence, its origin and its prevalence.

"Napoleon Bonaparte, sir, was no gentleman." This is a characteristically aristocratic-British view, pronounced by a typical British aristocrat of the period, a man who regarded his own soldiers as the "scum of the earth," who in later years opposed all democratic innovations.² But the Duke of

¹ *Parl. Debates*, February 29, 1808.

² Whose brother expressed horror at the idea of Pitt exposing himself to be shot by "so base-born an opponent as Tierney."

Wellington was not alone in his opinion. Throughout the letters and memoirs of the time (especially those written by Tories) we observe the contempt for the "parvenu Emperor," and the hatred of prescriptive right for the man of the people. The Emperor of Austria, when he gave Marie Louise in marriage to Napoleon, tried to trace out for the latter a decent, if not overwhelmingly exalted, pedigree from the Dukes of Tuscany. In a similar spirit Englishmen hated to see the son of unknown parents lording it over old-established dynasties and high-born potentates; and if this feeling in them found exactly the opposite vent to that of Francis—they tried to make out his lineage as even lower than it really was—that was merely because their capital had not been occupied by the vulgar soldiery of this plebeian usurper. It is true that this idea is not applied solely to Bonaparte. In 1802 Miss Berry,¹ who was then favourably impressed with the First Consul, observed the vulgarity and lack of smartness in French society; which in itself was disappointing to a people accustomed to look up to the French as their superiors in social distinction. And again, hear Colonel Nightingall² on French society under the Consulate. He is giving a description of the society at Amiens in 1801-2. "Not exactly the sort of society Lord Cornwallis would mix with by choice." Joseph Bonaparte is "rather the best among them,

¹ Miss Berry, *Journals and Correspondence*, Vol. II., 1802, *passim*.

² Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, January 10, 1802 : Vol. III. p. 436.

though he has not at all the manners of a gentleman." His wife is "a very short, very thin, very ugly, very vulgar little woman." The Prefect is "a very ill-looking scoundrel . . . not likely to become a bosom friend of ours." "I am sure you will agree with me that it is a great deal too bad that Lord Cornwallis should be obliged to live with and be civil to such a set." It is pleasant to find that Lord Cornwallis had less fastidiousness than his subordinate: "Joseph Bonaparte is a very modest, sensible, gentlemanlike man."¹

But Bonaparte himself was the main butt of the hostility and ridicule of the aristocrats. His elevation to the Empire above all provoked their mirth. The intolerable Earl of Buckingham discovered a joke, which he loved to repeat time after time in calling Bonaparte, "Sa Majesté très Corse."² Arthur Paget, too, a man of very different calibre, in March 1805 speaks³ of "Mr. Bonaparte and Mr. J. Bonaparte, and the rest of that illustrious family."

This idea comes out most strongly during the negotiations which led to the rupture of the Peace of Amiens. Lord Whitworth was an aristocrat, and Bonaparte's outbursts of passion, far from intimidating him, merely disgusted him. Among his remarks we may notice these: "When Bonaparte is out of his ceremonious habits, his language is coarse and vulgar. He has an Italian accent

¹ Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, December 15, 1801: Vol. III. p. 413.

² *Fortescue Papers*, January 19, 1800: Vol. VI. p. 106.

³ *Paget Papers*, March 20, 1805: Vol. II. p. 168.

and writes French ill." ¹ "Bonaparte loves talking, has quite 'un flux de bouche,' but not eloquent : does not listen." ² Again, we can trace the aristocrat's scorn for the parvenu society of France in such sentences as : "We have thought that the line which we are disposed to draw with regard to society should not extend to the House of the Minister for Foreign Affairs ;" ³ and the aristocrat's disgust at Bonaparte's use in the celebrated interview of an expression "too trivial and vulgar to find a place in a despatch, or anywhere but in the mouth of a hackney coachman." ⁴

Whitworth's opinion naturally prevailed in England as that of the man who had most intercourse with Napoleon. We trace his influence, above all, in Malmesbury, who, however, was already convinced. There were other observers also who appeared to bear out his testimony. Thus Jackson, ⁵ who went to Paris after the peace, said that "Bonaparte's manners were sarcastic, vulgar and impertinent, but certainly with a degree of cleverness and esprit." But it is during the Whitworth negotiations that allusions to the First Consul's "intemperate character" and "outrageous temper" become most frequent. One example will make this clear. It is curious to observe that at this period an idea was in vogue that he was mad : "Lord Hawkesbury said he thought the First Consul very like Paul, really mad . . . 'It must

¹ Malmesbury, Vol. IV. p. 257.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Despatches*, December 13, 1802, p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.* February 21, 1803, p. 82.

⁵ Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, April 27, 1802 : Vol. IV. p. 71.

be madness.' " ¹ Malmesbury ² writes that the Assassination Scheme excited in Bonaparte " temporary fits of passion similar to those Paul had towards the close of his reign." ³ It is not hard to trace the origin of this notion. On November 27, 1802, Whitworth speaks of " the indecent and outrageous conduct of the First Consul towards Count Staremberg. . . . I see in it only a nearer resemblance to the character of the late Emperor of Russia, and of course I cannot be surprised that their conduct should be so similar." ⁴

And yet it is not his madness which so much shocks those English gentlemen as what Addington ⁵ calls " the infatuated, mushroom arrogance of Bonaparte," and the " various little foolish tricks, insults of omission and commission, which Bonaparte has practised towards this country." It is thus too that Malmesbury comments ⁶ on the " very singular conference " with Whitworth. " It is clear, first, that Bonaparte has little discretion and no command of temper ; that, unused to control and command himself, he can brook no resistance or remonstrance . . . secondly, that the great aim

¹ Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, February 16, 1803, p. 202.

² *Ibid.* March 9, 1804, p. 293.

³ The idea of madness recurred in later years, and seemed almost to gain confirmation from the events at the close of his reign : on November 21, 1812, *The Times* suggests that the anxieties of his position have driven him mad. Signs of madness appeared after Aspern, and now his position is much worse.

⁴ *Despatches*, p. 17.

⁵ Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, February 19 : Vol. IV. p. 208.

⁶ *Ibid.* February 26, p. 218.

of this conference was to terrify us into submission, the trick of an Italian bully."

That this impression of the First Consul was not confined to the lofty circle of politicians and diplomatists is made clear by a quotation from W. Hunter's *Vindication of the Cause of Great Britain* : "an irritability of temper which no decency can control." And broadsides and caricatures of the period often exhibit Bonaparte in a condition of highly ungentlemanly rage. This impression did not diminish as time went on. In October 1815 the *Quarterly*¹ describes his language as "a mixture of oracular sublimity and low vulgarity; we should blush to repeat the instances we could select of the latter. His manners and habits vacillated between majesty and meanness." And the most striking example of this feeling took place on the *Northumberland*. Napoleon once got up rather hurriedly and left the room: "General Bonaparte, it seems, has not read Chesterfield," was Admiral Cockburn's comment.

Yet lack of birth was as grievous an offence as lack of manners. *The Times*² experiences "a painful feeling" when it sees Joseph Bonaparte, "a Corsican born to the inheritance of not a foot of land," ordering Spaniards to return to their native land on pain of losing their property there. Scott³ writes that "From a low isle his lowlier lineage came," and, as we have seen, the Countess of Uxbridge⁴ suffers from a "raging fever" because of

¹ On Bonaparte.

² May 18, 1809.

³ *Don Roderick*, XXXIX. See p. 230.

⁴ *Paget Papers*, January 4, 1806: Vol. II. p. 264.

the homage paid to Madame Bonaparte by our Princess Royal. She could not conceive "anything more humiliating." These phrases almost justify Hobhouse's remark,¹ that if Napoleon had been born in the purple, he would not have been pursued by the same obloquy: "The head and front of his offending hath this extent—no more."

It is curious to find that even his apologists share to a slight extent in the same feeling. Lord Holland² writes of him that "the ill-breeding generated in camps and clubs, and the dry, undignified formality, which often disfigures the manners of official men, were discernible in his drawing-room and ante-chamber." Elsewhere he rebuts the charge that Napoleon was revengeful, in these words: "His few vengeance were of an insolent rather than a sanguinary character . . . *a proof of his want of manners, taste and possibly feeling,*³ but not of a dye to affect his humanity." And Hobhouse in his Diary⁴ describes the familiarity of Napoleon with his soldiers at a review, gives parallel instances, and continues: "These manners may seem gross and vulgar, but certainly they have succeeded completely with the French soldiery."

On the other hand, the majority of the people who came across him, especially at St. Helena, were, as we have seen, delighted with his manners. The worthy Warden, surgeon of the *Northumberland*, is never tired of descanting on his "unassuming manners," patience in conversation, unfailing good

¹ Letter XIV, Vol. I. p. 320.

² *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 286.

³ Italics are mine.

⁴ *Recollections*, May 22, 1815.

temper, and goes so far as to say that at the family parties of the Balcombes, Napoleon "is neither troublesome nor intrusive, but conducts himself *with the manners of a gentleman*,¹ and a lively demeanour that promotes the general vivacity of the domestic circle." Nor is this impression confined to St. Helena. In 1802 Miss Mary Berry² describes his manner and address as very simple and unaffected, and Sinclair,³ one of his captives, in 1806 writes: "When taken before him, I had the strongest prejudice against him, I considered him the enemy of my country and the oppressor of the rest of Europe. On quitting him, the grace and fascination of his smile and that superior intelligence which illumined his face had entirely subjugated me;" and Captain Ussher does justice to his dignified manners.

On this basis of ungentlemanliness the idea of the vulgar tyrant was built. It led directly to the charge of an uncontrolled temper, such as every self-respecting despot ought to possess. Whitworth is again the principal author of the idea: everywhere in his despatches we find allusions to the First Consul's "passion and petulance," "the violence of his temper." We find the author of *Publicola's Appeal*, etc., contrasting "the calm defensive demeanour of Talleyrand, and the vehement offensive tone assumed by his master." In passing we may note that this contrast is not a usual one at this period; for in the caricatures

¹ Italics are mine.

² *Journals and Correspondence*, 1802: Vol. II. p. 186.

³ *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives*, p. 253.

"Boney" and "Talley" are always associated together, almost as boon companions, usually in a state of consternation, and invariably exclaiming "Begar," with the not infrequent addition of "dis dam John Bull." The conference with Whitworth was very largely quoted, *e. g.* by Addington and Malmesbury, to prove Bonaparte's lack of discretion and of command of temper. J. Scott, in his *Visit to Paris*, expands this idea. "Josephine," he writes,¹ "had suffered much from Bonaparte's ill temper, kindled in consequence of her remonstrances against his violent measures. At last the courage of goodness which she long maintained gave way, and she became afraid to speak to him. The murder of the Duc d'Enghien grieved her to the soul, but the domestic and political tyrant had in his face at this awful period what prevented the mediator from making any attempt to save the victim."

The picture was embellished by other amiable traits—revengefulness, conceit, love of flattery. Coleridge,² after Napoleon's death, could write: "For the late tyrant's vindictive appetite was omnivorous, and could prey equally on a Duc d'Enghien and the writer of a newspaper paragraph."³ Like a true vulture, Napoleon, with an eye not less telescopic and with a taste equally coarse in his ravin, could descend from the most dazzling heights to pounce on the leveret in the brake or even on

¹ p. 216. Josephine is unduly idealized.

² *Biographia Literaria*, p. 103.

³ The allusion is to himself. He thought that in 1803 Napoleon wished to arrest him in revenge for certain articles he had written about him in the *Courier*.

the field-mouse in the grass." Coleridge after 1803, it must be remembered, adopted this view of the vulgar tyrant pretty completely; and in this view revengefulness was bound up with suspicion. It is of course a well-known stage property of tyrants to be suspicious. So we find Mr. Merry,¹ who had been in Paris, saying that "Bonaparte's temper was most suspicious, and vindictive and violent beyond measure." This, he adds, caused him to arrest d'Auvergne because La Vendée was still what he most dreaded.

Closely connected with these characteristics is the essentially tyrannic trait of savagery. "The most savage devil that ever disgraced human nature,"² is Lord Paget's elegant description of Bonaparte in 1804, while the *Edinburgh Review*³ says that he is a combination of the gloomy,⁴ suspicious Tiberius with the savage barbarian Attila, and certainly has not "the majestic form of a mighty monarch."

The Greek tyrants of old are said to have loved flattery. Hence this untrue accusation is sometimes, e. g. by Mr. Hunter in his *Vindication of the Cause of Great Britain*, though not often, brought up against Bonaparte; and the "pettiness of mind" peculiar to despots is attributed to him by Coleridge,⁵ who, comparing him with Alva, remarks that an incident

¹ Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, February 16, 1803 : Vol. IV. p. 203.

² *Paget Papers*, April 20, 1804 : Vol. II. p. 128.

³ January 1809 : Vol. XIII. p. 456.

⁴ Cp. "Bonaparte seldom or never showed gaiety." *Visit to Paris*, p. 217.

⁵ *Essays*, December 15, 1809.

in the latter's career exhibits in him "a soreness of vanity, a pettiness of resentment, and a vulgarity of moral being strongly recalling the same traits in the Corsican," and adds that it proves that "Bonaparte owes the baseness of his nature to his being a remorseless tyrant, and not to his low birth or to his consanguinity with the assassins and banditti of the notorious Corsica." It is hardly necessary to add that perfidy and hypocrisy, admirable cothurni to add to the tragic dignity, contribute to this masterpiece. He is regarded as a true disciple of Machiavelli: "He is the first statesman who has attempted to follow in practice the infamous theory of that diabolical writer."¹ Scott in 1814,² speaking of the idea that Napoleon is going to write his own history, writes: "Spain, the Continental System and Russia he may record as his three leading blunders—an awful lesson to sovereigns that morality is not so indifferent to politics as Machiavellians will assert." As early as 1800 and 1801, speakers comment on "frauds of the most disgraceful kind."³

Such statements, however distorted, are at least credible, and, considering the circumstances, almost excusable. Far more ridiculous are the charges brought against him by extreme Tories, notably Scott, of timidity—a charge which seems to have been widespread, seeing that Hobhouse thought it worth his while to show its absurdity—of lack of stamina, of feebleness: "But this is a poor

¹ W. Hunter, *Vindication*.

² *Letters*, April 30, 1814: Vol. III. p. 115.

³ Windham, *Speeches*, November 4, 1801: Vol. II. p. 29.

devil and cannot play the tyrant so rarely as Bottom the weaver proposed to do." ¹ If Whitworth's bitter and contemptuous remarks inaugurated this view of Bonaparte, it was *The Times* which largely kept it alive. To us, who only know that paper in its modern staid and stately mood, the rancour with which it attacked Napoleon and the French is almost inconceivable. We can hardly imagine a modern newspaper talking about "the wicked and almost idiotical suggestion that Bonaparte is as good as other monarchs," ² and actually putting into print the following masterpiece: ³ "Are you or are you not, we would ask, convinced that Bonaparte is a bloodier villain than terms can give out?" In Bonaparte it can see nothing but the tyrant and the charlatan, with, it had to admit, some military genius—though after 1812 it took the utmost delight in minimizing even that quality. All the proper tyrannic qualities are duly brought out. He is scurrilous to his enemies (who, it must be admitted, seem quite capable of looking after themselves in this department). He has more than the average tyrant's hatred of virtue and patriotism. "This man hates and blackens those high qualities because he feels he has nothing kindred to them in his own nature. He loves no country; he has none." ⁴ He has Macbeth's utter devotion to ambition: he is a prey to superstitious terrors, *e. g.* of the Cossacks—a most unfounded

¹ Scott, *Letters*, June 17, 1814: Vol. III. p. 118.

² December 12, 1813.

³ March 2, 1814.

⁴ March 16, 1809, speaking of Saragossa and Bonaparte's attack on the character of Palafox.

accusation but one widely spread, as tallying well with the stock view of the tyrant. He is a hypocrite both in the literal sense of the word—for he is always acting a part¹—and in the ordinary sense; for “the crown of his vices is his impiety.” *The Times* instances as a “shocking” instance of this the thanksgiving service for Lutzen and Bautzen. To this hypocrisy it attributes the “whining scene” between Bonaparte and the dying Lannes after Aspern,² and his “sensibility” with regard to Duroc at Bautzen—“odious, disgusting, contemptible hypocrisy.”³ But the newspaper reaches its high-water mark of abuse at the time of Napoleon’s fall: it contrasts his “mean and cowardly whining” in defeat, with his “vain, thrasonical” boasting in success; insists on his physical cowardice again and again, *e. g.* “Jerry Sneak was a hero to him,” and “The murderer of millions evinced an amiable sensibility when the object of alarm was himself.”⁴

There was, however, a certain modification of this view of the tyrant which put it at once on a more reasonable plane. Wordsworth, whose hatred for Napoleon is even stronger, though less crude, than that of *The Times*, laid stress on his barbarity rather than his baseness, as also did Horner, a

¹ April 15, 1814. “Anecdotes of the deposed tyrant confirm the idea we always entertained of his littleness, his vanity and his ferocity. They show that he was always acting a part even to himself; and even now he perhaps flatters himself that his cowardice . . . was nothing more than a philosophic moderation and contempt of empire.”

² June 8, 1809.

³ April 23, 1813.

⁴ April 9, 1814.

strong anti-militarist who loathed "the whole race of conquerors," and described Napoleon as "this restless barbarian." While *The Times* saw mainly a coward and a charlatan, Wordsworth saw a monster and a barbarian, full of "Satanic pride and depraved confidence," whose courage, shared equally by a Satan and an Abdiel, constituted no virtue;¹ so in the pages of his *Convention of Cintra* we see not the trembling Greek tyrant of *The Times*, but a brutal oppressive, reckless, oriental² conqueror, not an "Empedocles or a Domitian, but an Attila or a Tamerlane." To Wordsworth Napoleon's prosperity is due not to his talents, which are ordinary, but to his abandonment of all moral principle, which "opens a new world of forces to him."³ Hence his power has not sprung from "rare endowments of talents," or "accumulations of knowledge," but from circumstances which "have stimulated passions whose natural food hath been and is ignorance; from the barbarian impotence and insolence of a mind—originally of ordinary constitution—lagging in moral sentiment and knowledge, three hundred years behind the age in which it acts."⁴ Napoleon's sins are worse than any recorded in history because he sins against the light. Yet to Wordsworth the ferocity of the de-civilizer⁵ of mankind is less hateful than the

¹ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 50.

² Compare Scott, *Letters*, June 17, 1814, cited *supra*, p. 247.

³ See Chapter II, section 6, p. 124.

⁴ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 140.

⁵ Again Horner's view is the same as that of Wordsworth. In September 1807 he speaks of the institutions of Europe "stiffening into barbarism."

“arrogant assumptions of beneficence” made by him. Attila and Tamerlane, other typical destroyers, who called themselves the scourges of God and impersonated Providence, do less outrage to the reason than one who, like Napoleon, “arrogates to himself the gentle and gracious attributes of the Deity.”¹

Wordsworth, we see, adopts the attitude of extreme hostility, and it is possibly no exaggeration to say that he was, with the possible exception of Fichte, the most powerful intellectual force that Napoleon had to encounter, and his uncompromising defiance is a great contrast with Goethe’s acquiescence.

The theatrical picture of a typical villain did not quite satisfy all the more intelligent people, however hostile they might be. No doubt they felt that the description of Bonaparte as a quite ordinary man, only formidable because he had thrown away moral restraint, was inadequate and incompatible with the terror which his name inspired. It was difficult to imagine such a creature conquering the greater part of Europe, however much his power and success was attributed to subtlety and duplicity rather than to genius and strength. But the view which they substitute is very little more favourable to Napoleon: in many respects it closely resembles that which we have just discussed, and particularly that which we have attributed to Wordsworth. The main difference lies in two points. This view, of which the *Edinburgh Review*, Burdon, Horner and Coleridge before 1803, are the main exponents,

¹ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 58.

does justice to Bonaparte's abilities; and, secondly, it lays most emphasis on his selfishness, not on his baseness or barbarity. Further, to complete the idea of his inhuman selfishness, all the human little traits in his character, his pettiness and his love of flattery, are ruthlessly swept away. Romilly¹ speaks of the scorn in which he holds the opinions of the people: "He seems to despise their favour, and, if he supplies them with frequent festivals, it is less to gain popularity than to occupy and amuse them." Elsewhere the same writer lays stress on his selfishness: "He takes no pains to gain popularity. All his great works are calculated to immortalize his own name, not to benefit the people."

Burdon, who is always sensible, admits that Bonaparte is not lustful; and this point was usually conceded by any reasonably unprejudiced observer. "There was no appearance and very little reality in the dissoluteness of manners attributed by our ignorant libellists to his family and favourites," is the testimony of Lord Holland;² and Coleridge, in March 1800—at this period, however, he is rather favourable to Napoleon—says that he has introduced a new tone of morality into France, and made it the fashion to imitate "his rigid and simple character." "He is too intensely preoccupied to be otherwise than austere in morals."³ But the fact that Napoleon was clear of the grosser vices only intensified the notion of his inhuman pitiless-

¹ *Memoirs*, 1802: Vol. II. p. 98.

² *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 286.

³ *Essays*, March 11, 1800: Vol. II. p. 418. Coleridge exaggerates Bonaparte's "austerity."

ness, of a heart "steeled against compassion or any other humanizing feeling."¹ He was even regarded as possessing no natural love for his family. Thus Burdon argues from his lack of lust that he is cold-hearted, wholly engrossed in one object. In fact, Englishmen would have hated him less if he had had "the social vices of a soldier of fortune";² for not only would they have found him more human, but it would have given them an undeniable theme for abuse, and one on which they could dilate with more success than on his "perfidy, ingratitude and fiend-like cruelty" (Burdon), which usually means a mere recitation of Jaffa and El Arish.

Coleridge prior to 1803 adopted this view: in a series of articles he compares France and Rome, and in one of them³ he compares Bonaparte with various Roman emperors. In military affairs and love of science he resembles Julius,⁴ and also in his "imperious irritable and ostentatious mind"; Augustus in his "close application to public business, his encouragement of the liberal arts and great public works, and his constitutional *coldness* and politic craft"; Tiberius in his "reserve, darkness," employment of spies, hatred of political discussions and of bold political writings, indifference to religion save for State policy, superstition regarding fate, and a blind confidence in his destinies. This is not a very favourable delineation, but it

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, April 1814: Vol. XXIII. p. 3.

² *Ibid.*

³ September 21, 1802: Vol. II. p. 480.

⁴ Elsewhere he says that he has not the "dreadless clemency" of Julius.

contrasts with the picture of a cowering criminal which Coleridge, later on, so loved to draw. This, too, is the view of Francis Horner, who gives his view of Bonaparte to Jeffrey in these words: "Besides his belonging to the odious herd of military disturbers of the world,"—Horner was a strong anti-militarist—"his genius is of so hard a cast, and his style so theatrical, and the magnanimity he shows—which cannot be denied him—is so far from being simple and is so little softened with moral affections, that I could never find in him any of the elements of heroism according to my taste." ¹

The note of the *Edinburgh Review* is that he is to be dreaded and abhorred but not despised, and, as is natural with a periodical which is time-serving, though weighty, it becomes harsher upon his fall. In April 1807 ² a sarcastic passage speaks of his irascibility and vindictiveness, his disregard of the lives of others, his insatiable ambition; the two last qualities are "very much in the common heroic style": so he is not "much worse than the common run of conquerors and arbitrary princes; we are inclined to place him as to general character not far from the great Catherine or the illustrious Frederick whom we admire." Its general summary ³ of this "brilliant but pestilential meteor" at his fall is more hostile. "He still seems to us a man of *consummate conduct, valour* and decision in war, but without the virtues or even the generous and social vices of a soldier of fortune; of

¹ *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 258.

² Vol. X. p. 9.

³ April 1814: Vol. XXIII. p. 4.

matchless activity indeed and boundless ambition, but entirely without principle, *feeling* or *affection*; suspicious, cruel and overbearing; *selfish and solitary in all his pursuits and gratifications*; proud and overweening to the very borders of insanity; and considering at last the laws of honour and the principles of morality equally beneath his notice *with the interests and feelings of other men*. Despising those who submitted to his pretensions, and pursuing with implacable hatred all who presumed to resist them, he seems to have gone on in a growing confidence in his own fortune and a contempt for mankind—till a serious check from without showed him the error of his calculations, and betrayed the fatal insecurity of a career which reckoned only on prosperity.”¹ In the same strain J. Scott² accuses Bonaparte of having opposed intellect to principle, “of feeling nothing, but using everything,” of regarding human passions like machinery.

Before passing on to the favourable view of Napoleon, we may examine the view of the *Quarterly*,³ given after his final fall. This periodical is too judicial to deny Napoleon’s greatness, too Tory to admit it fully: it says that his talents and success were great, but history will not call him a great man. To reconcile this apparent contradiction, it lays stress on the contradictions in his character, *e. g.* in his political character he was “magnificent,” in his personal conduct he was mean. His most vast designs were the mere freaks of restlessness,

¹ I have italicized the distinctive parts of this view.

² *Visit to Paris*, Introduction, p. v.

³ October 1815: Vol. XIV. pp. 92–6.

and had either no object or a selfish one: "The first part of his mind was always grand, the next, little and vile." Similarly he was a hero and a coward, "in action a giant, in suffering a child." A craniologist would find in him the organs of a tiger and a peacock. Another point which it emphasizes is his restlessness. Here we may, perhaps, trace the influence of Sir Neil Campbell's view. This officer¹ comments on his "restless perseverance," his "pleasure in perpetual movement," says that he thinks it impossible for him to sit down "to study or any pursuits of retirement," that "his thoughts seem to dwell perpetually on the operations of war." For this restlessness, the *Quarterly* proceeds, due as it was to the combination of audacity and ambition controlled or weakened by selfishness, the French Revolution was the natural element. From it came his "vague and wild orientalism," and this is "the basis of his existence; he lives in a hurricane."

But in the final conclusion the idea of contradictoriness prevails. The reviewer speaks of him as "displaying in his alternate extravagances all that is most noble and most vile in human nature, the greatest majesty of sovereignty and the boldest decision of command with the most ignoble subterfuges and the most dastardly pusillanimity, listening through keyholes for evidence on which to dethrone monarchs, and uniting the audacity of a Tamerlane with the arts of a washerwoman." This view of him was also entertained by Pitt a dozen years before (1803); Pitt regarded Napoleon

¹ *Diary on Elba*, May 27.

as the troubler of Europe—an idea emphasized in his important speech of February 3, 1800—and we find him committing his opinion to paper in these words : “ I see various and opposite qualities—all the great and all the little passions unfavourable to public tranquillity—united in the breast of one man, and of that man, unhappily, whose personal caprice can scarce fluctuate for an hour without affecting the destiny of Europe. I see the inward workings of fear struggling with pride in an ardent, enterprising and tumultuous mind. I see all the captious jealousy of conscious usurpation, dreaded, detested and obeyed—the giddiness and intoxication of splendid but unmerited success,—the arrogance, the presumption, the self-will of unlimited and idolized power, and—more dreadful than all in the plenitude of authority—the restless and incessant activity of guilty but unsated ambition.” ¹

The favourable view of Napoleon is confined to very few Englishmen. We do not find his enemies allowing him many virtues, save those of being “ a bold and active soldier of fortune,” ² or “ a cursed hardy knave both in body and mind.” ³ One exception, however, is striking as coming from one of his most vociferous enemies. Canning ⁴ has to confess that Napoleon is always loyal to his allies.

From Lord Holland we get an impartial view of

¹ Stanhope, *Life of Pitt*, Vol. III. p. 269.

² *Edinburgh Review*, September 1814.

³ Captain Moore in the *Creevey Papers*, September 19, 1809 : Vol. I. p. 96.

⁴ *Speeches*, February 3, 1808 : Vol. II. p. 335.

Napoleon. He looked on in a detached manner at the events of his day. Playing no very great part in politics himself, he has none of the inveterate party hostility of Hobhouse. Where blame is really due, as in the d'Enghien affair, we find him blaming Napoleon. For the most part he contents himself with rebutting libels—we have seen¹ that he denies that the Emperor was dissolute—and we feel throughout that he is taking up the line of a vindicator against calumny. When he says that “Napoleon seemed actually in love with Marie Louise and always treated her well,”² we remember not only the libels of the caricaturists, but the remarks of serious writers who considered him incapable of affection. His positive view of Napoleon is adequately summed up in his own quotation: “Il avait le sentiment du Grand mais non pas celui du Beau.”³

Mr. H. Scott may be reckoned among those who took a favourable view of Bonaparte, because at a moment when prejudice was rampant (1814) he had the courage to produce what is a fairly impartial history of his life. In his final summary of Napoleon's character he gives him full credit for his complete victory over the passions, for his abstemiousness and lack of human weakness, for his courage, and for the fact that he had many friends, but no minions; he does justice to his “astonishing talents and abilities,” calls him the most amazing character in history, and prophesies that “his

¹ See *supra*, p. 274.

² *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 241.

³ *Ibid.* p. 290.

genuine character after the death of prejudice and party spirit will be more justly appreciated a hundred years hence than it is at present.”¹

For positive admiration we must go to Hobhouse. It cannot be said that Whitbread or even Burdett were real admirers. One can hardly help feeling that their attitude towards Napoleon was largely dictated by opposition to the Government. But Hobhouse is a Revolutionist of Revolutionists, and is full of a youthful enthusiasm for the cause of liberty, for which, to his mind, Napoleon stood. Secondly, he admired force. His biographer says that he had two heroes, Napoleon and Byron—the latter is the embodiment of force in poetry just as Napoleon is in war. Hence he idealized Napoleon. This idealism appears in his description of the Emperor: ² “I never saw anybody with such a face. The lower part is not even *imitable* scarcely save in Mrs. Damer’s pictures.” At a review ³ he was much moved at an interview between Napoleon and a discharged soldier, when he remarked, “the unruffled calmness of his countenance relapsing softly into a look of attention and kindness.” We feel Hobhouse’s youthful enthusiasm when he describes the noble qualities of his idol. Speaking of Napoleon’s continued friendship with the actor Talma, he writes ⁴: “The royal vice of ingratitude finds no place in the bosom of the

¹ pp. 229–234. Compare the *Edinburgh Review* (April 1814, State of Europe): “History will not rate him so low as modern English newspapers.”

² *Recollections*, Diary, May 22, 1815: Vol. I. p. 272.

³ Letter III, Vol. I. p. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 45.

usurper; this baseness belongs to such as are born kings. There is something magical in that power of personal attachment which is proved by a thousand notorious facts to belong to this extraordinary man; and never had one who wore a crown so many friends, or retained them so long." In the same spirit he lauds, while affecting to condemn, Napoleon's "extreme carelessness and generosity in pecuniary matters," and "his excess of affection and esteem for his brothers." He remarks that "the love of his brother (Lucien) has always been a fault with him"; while the rest of England was condemning him for heartlessness, he mentions Napoleon's fondness for children, as indeed do some of his other admirers,—Home, Warden, etc.,—so that we must believe that he was really fond of them or made a capital pretence of it; he says that Napoleon's letters to Josephine "show him in an extraordinary light." Thus Hobhouse *humanizes* Napoleon; he goes further and depicts him as "the enlightened despot," the patron of art, science and literature, a great contrast to the Bourbons, and remarks on his "sage and liberal institutions." Finally he fixes ¹ Napoleon's place in history as the "man of the age." The spirit of the age is irresistible: the man cannot direct or control it; he can only follow it. So all heroes have found rather than made their way to greatness. Thus it was with Napoleon, who swept all before him while he rode on the stream; when he went further, his genius enabled him to attain a temporary exaltation; "but the first obstacle, the first re-

¹ Letter XVI, Vol. I. p. 365-6.

mission of his toil put an end to his career; the waters rushed rapidly back to their natural bed, and left him on the rocks." It was not the cause that fell, but the man for deserting the cause, which has proved its survival by recalling him; a republic, however, would have better stood the trial than a monarchy. Four parallel passages to this may be cited two of them from men absolutely antithetical to Hobhouse in opinion. The first comes from Horne Tooke.¹ He remarks that each great crisis in history has produced a great man, and that with regard to the last of these periods a single man had been highly instrumental. "He possesses all the qualities of a great genius, he is truly a hero." The second is Scott's stanza, quoted above:² "Or is thy soul like mountain-tide." The third comes from Lord Wellesley,³ who said that, though he "had viewed in Bonaparte the most active and efficient advocate of the system of the Revolution, still he had never ceased to think that person most likely to expose that very system to destruction."

Finally, the Duke of Wellington in 1837 said that, like O'Connell, "Napoleon was not a personality, but a principle."

¹ *Memoirs of Horne Tooke*, 1811. Mr. Stephens, the biographer, strongly dissents from this view.

² *Supra*, Chapter V, section ii. p. 233.

³ *Parl. Debates*, April 12, 1811.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COLERIDGE'S CHANGE OF OPINION

THE Coleridge whom we find writing to the *Courier* in 1809 is a very different person from the Coleridge of sound political judgment whom we left in 1802. He now appears to be a sort of monomaniac. His irrational attacks on Bonaparte miss their object through excess of violence, and reveal the weakness of an hysterical nature. What are we to say about this? The Marquis of Wellesley in a true spirit of aristocracy had said: "It was not for him to join with those who would have recourse to vile and general abuse." Coleridge's comment ¹ is, "Neither Austerlitz, Jena nor Wagram filled me with such fear of approaching subjugation and slavery as the words of a certain nobleman." Could childishness go further? He further remarks that Bonaparte is trying to entrap men of the greatest power in England, and that our best protection is to hold up Bonaparte's vices: "Whoever advises a different course, *saps the foundation of England's independence.*" Hence Coleridge in 1809 is practically worthless as an authority. Of course it must be remem-

¹ *Essays*, Vol. II. p. 824.

bered that Coleridge was an extremist in all he did ; and that he is sincere, is clear enough from his disgust at Napier's history of the Peninsular War twenty-two years afterwards.¹ In the second place, unlike Scott, Coleridge believed in ultra-writing. To justify his virulence, he attacks those who seem "to rank wisdom and truth among Alpine flowers which can flourish only amid ice and snow," and inveighs against "a cold self-possession, a complete tranquillity" in important matters.² No one could at any rate accuse Coleridge of possessing these failings, but when we remember Wellington and Castlereagh, we feel that they cannot be so blameworthy after all. But there was another reason for Coleridge's fury. I do not mean his health, though that, no doubt, made him irritable. Let him tell the tale himself. "In 1803 I was a specified object of Bonaparte's resentment during my residence in Italy, in consequence of those essays in the *Morning Post* during the Peace of Amiens. I was warned by Humboldt and indirectly through Cardinal Fesch ; an order for my arrest was sent from Paris, from which danger I was rescued by the kindness of a noble Benedictine and the gracious connivance of that good old man, the present Pope."³ Here, I think, we can find one cause of Coleridge's overmastering hatred for Napoleon.

¹ *Table Talk*, June 26, 1831.

² *Essays*, December 21, 1809 : Vol. II. p. 649.

³ *Biographia Literaria*, p. 103.

APPENDIX B

A VALUABLE source of information with regard to English opinion on the projected invasion is to be found in certain letters which were sent to India, bearing the dates June, July, August 1803. They were captured by a French privateer, published in French in the *Moniteur*, and re-translated into English with properly patriotic comments.¹ But the sentiments of these letters must be regarded with caution. Those published are merely a fraction of those captured, and the French Government would naturally select those which were most favourable to France or which appeared to dread invasion most. For example, the *Moniteur expressly* leaves out those which contain abuse of Bonaparte or of France, save one, that of Mr. J. Hammond, which is to serve as a sample for the rest. He writes : " This wretch has certainly been sent into the world as a scourge for humanity."

Nevertheless, we can discern certain current lines of opinion. In the first place, almost everybody is convinced that the French will make the attempt, *e. g.* " When this reaches you, the great blow will have been struck ; " and again, William Macdowall informs his brother that " Bonaparte had taken Hanover and seems determined upon an invasion, and I am persuaded he will attempt it, because it is necessary for him to do something to keep his troops employed." Nevertheless, a certain section

¹ They were published in Dublin in 1803, and are to be found among " Irish Tracts " in the Bodleian Library (8° G. 85 Jur.).

consider that Bonaparte would act more wisely if he attacked the finances of the country by merely threatening an invasion, and thus forcing the English to keep up large armaments. Thus Mr. J. S. Hall, whose letter is given an unholy prominence by the French editor, remarks : " Will a man so loaded with reputation, crowned with laurels, the brilliant reward of his actions, Emperor of Empires and Dictator of the World, abandon everything to chance and stake all upon one blow? If Bonaparte be that enlightened genius, that enlarged mind as I suppose he is, he will keep up the idea of invasion with the view of obliging us to maintain our present enormous force; and thus, by making war on our finances, complete our ruin without striking a blow : " an idea also found in another letter : " If the enemy attempt nothing, want of money will ruin us." We have evidence ¹ that this view was very widely held at this time.

In the event of a successful landing, opinions are much divided as to the result. On the one hand there is England, an armed and resolute nation; on the other, " Bonaparte's genius and fortune." Sometimes the former predominates. John Maid writes : " We have no dread of invasion, though we expect it every day. All the world is prepared for such an event, so that Bonaparte would have to kill at least a million of men before he could conquer England." England an armed nation is a very prominent idea.

¹ Spence in *Britain Independent of Commerce*, quoted by Dr. J. H. Rose in *Napoleonic Studies*, mentions it as a current opinion in 1803-5.

On the other hand, we get such expressions as those of Mr. J. Jones : " I really think they will effect it " (the invasion); " but God protect us. They would carry the whole country ; " of Mr. J. Roberts : " But I cannot subdue my anxiety when I reflect on the unprecedented good fortune of Bonaparte everywhere victorious ; " and of Mr. J. Blahker : " I ought to consider the French as an instrument made use of by Providence to punish the sins of other people." Again, the question of French success in the opinions of some depends on another and an all-important question : " Would the poor join the invaders ? " This question shows that the dread of an English revolution had not yet subsided, that the French were still regarded as the militant apostles of revolutionary doctrines, and that to many men's minds Bonaparte still appeared as the " armed champion of democracy." One man declares outright that the poor *would* make common cause with the French, and Mr. J. S. Hall, rather an advanced Radical, one might conjecture, talks of the pride of the rich and their insolence to the poor, and says that a complete British victory would make this worse. Above all, there predominates the idea that Ireland is far more vulnerable than England. Bonaparte, says Mr. Hertwill, " is an idiot " if he does not attempt an invasion of Ireland ; and there is quite a general conviction that if the French were to land in Ireland, they would be joined by 100,000 Irish. Therefore Mr. Taylor is " persuaded that Ireland is more the object to which the French look than England." But he goes on to add, and in this his view is shared by many others,

that he suspects "that Egypt and India are again and more than ever the objects of their desires." That the lesson of Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition was not lost on Englishmen of that day is clear enough from the fear of the Directors of the East India Company, that Bonaparte was going to use the great army of Italy against our Oriental possessions. Thus, too, Mr. Mac to General Clinton: "Bonaparte is so ambitious that he will certainly make every effort to get possession of our Oriental colonies if he can, and the loss of the Cape renders his success probable if he should make the attempt, which God forbid; but circumstances are horrible." It is painful to add that a few of the writers seem to fear material loss to themselves owing to the capture of these colonies much more than an invasion of England.

Nevertheless, the spirit of the great majority of the writers is courageous and free from hysteria. Few other nations would have looked at invasion so calmly and collectedly. The letters do not contain many ideas of Bonaparte's character apart from his policy. Hall is distinctly laudatory, and passages above show that the Attila view of Bonaparte was widespread even at this early stage.

APPENDIX C

COLONEL HUTCHINSON'S PANEGYRIC ON BONAPARTE
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—JUNE 7, 1811

"WITH the exception of the war in the Peninsula, Bonaparte's splendid and unequalled success has

been the result of plans wisely conceived and ably executed. His objects have been worthy a great conqueror, his exertions and means employed fully equal to the attainment. Look to him in 1799, when for the first time he was placed at the head of the Government of France, collecting at Dijon an army of reserve—ridiculed because its object was not understood—with which he secured his victory at Marengo in the following year. See him at Boulogne with his army of England, equally ridiculed, preparing in 1803 for the defeat of Austria at Austerlitz in 1805. Behold him in his Confederation of the Rhine, early in 1806, anticipating by its agency the enthralldom of Germany, the subjugation of the Prussian monarchy and the humbling of the great Autocrat of the North. View him on the Vistula in 1806-7—while we were ridiculing his exertions, anticipating his destruction, and paralyzed into a state of culpable inactivity—collecting troops from Italy and the most western extremities of France, Flanders and Holland, by the aid of whom he afterwards fought and conquered on the memorable day of Friedland, decisive of so much ! Witness similar exertions after the battle of Asperns, when at Wagram he repaired the disasters of that day and established his real supremacy in Europe by a masterly and rapid junction of scattered and distant corps. See him at this moment in the north-west of Europe under the pretext of merely excluding British commerce from the Continent (one of his objects doubtless—one, too, originally ridiculed as visionary, but which unhappily for us has been but too successful), organizing a force by which he

has already nominated to the throne of Sweden, and is now enabled to make any distribution he pleases of those of Denmark and Prussia. See him at Dantzic, Custrine, and Stettin—behold on the north-east of Germany his long-delayed but sure-working plans for the re-integration of Poland, whence, as from a citadel, he will be able to hold in subjection the whole European continent. View him in his Illyrian Empire, already directing his footsteps, resolved to plant his eagles on the Byzantine throne of the Cæsars. And finally behold him calling out the conscripts for 1811 for the purpose of securing, if not resisted by counter-exertions on our part, the conquest of Spain and Portugal, however hitherto deferred—and not unlikely for ulterior objects too. . . .

“From these examples, sir, it is evident that Napoleon has left nothing to accident or chance, but that, save for Spain, he has invariably acted on plans suggested by the wisest policy and carried into effect with the most consummate military talent.”

APPENDIX D

WORDSWORTH'S IDEA OF THE PENINSULAR WAR

IN Wordsworth's *Convention of Cintra* we can see how far he idealized the Spaniards. The intensity of his feelings on this subject carried him into two curious mistakes. In the first place he seems to take it for granted that the British soldiers would carry into the field “the loves and hates of

citizens," and that the "conduct of the rapacious and merciless adversary" would make quite impossible "the triumphs of the courteous affections and the refinements of civility."¹ On the contrary, the relations between the men of the contending armies were remarkably friendly all through the war from the Talavera campaign onwards. Hobhouse speaks of the liberal feeling entertained towards Napoleon in the army.

Wordsworth's second mistake has in it something of the ridiculous. This loss of civility to the enemy, he proceeds,² would be compensated for to the British soldier by "the enthusiasm of the fraternal love of his allies and the contemplation of their virtues." "Never was the irresistible power of justice more gloriously shown than when the British and Spanish nations . . . mutually embraced each other—to solemnize this conversion of love not by the festivities of peace but by combating side by side . . . in the devotedness of perfect brotherhood." The contemplation of Spanish virtues, the conversion of love, the devotedness of perfect brotherhood are thoroughly brought out by Lord Paget,³ certainly no well-wisher to Napoleon: "Spain is gone, nor are the people worth saving;" by the Hon. H. C. Lowther,⁴ who says that the Spanish atrocities are

¹ *Prose Works*, Vol. I. p. 38.

² *Ibid.* p. 41.

³ *Paget Papers*, December 22, 1808: Vol. II. p. 389. The same officer writes to Lord Holland from Sahagun on December 23, 1808, rating him for his pro-Spanish sentiments: "'Tis a country not worth saving. Such ignorance, such deceit, such apathy, such pusillanimity, such cruelty was (*sic*) never before united." He concludes, "Open your eyes my dear Lord." Lady Holland, *Spanish Journal*, p. 376.

⁴ *Earl of Lonsdale's Papers*, p. 238.

such "as to make me hate the name of Spaniard as long as I live;" and by the events of the Talavera campaign, when the "perfect brothers" abandoned the British wounded to the "merciless enemy" who treated them thoroughly well. Finally, this idealization of the Spaniards led Wordsworth on to dangerous ground when he attacked Moore's distrust of them.

It is needless to add that Southey's views coincide; he thinks it ridiculous to treat the French "as fair and honourable enemies," criticizes Sir John Moore, and says that no people have been so basely calumniated as the Spaniards. To sum up, for real ferocity we have to go, not to the soldiers, but to the poets.

APPENDIX E

EXCESSIVE ABUSE OF BONAPARTE

THERE are signs that the more intelligent part of the community were becoming annoyed with the senseless heaping of epithet on epithet against Bonaparte. Thus the *Gentleman's Magazine* (April 1806) ridicules a sermon in which he is described as "the fiend of the bottomless pit, the Hebrew Abaddon, the Greek Apollyon, the Latin Exterminans or Perdens." To call him "the monster" or "the enemy of mankind" seemed the feeble outpouring of irrational spleen. This feeling was voiced by Lord Wellesley: ¹ "it was not for him to join with

¹ *Parl. Debates*, June 24, 1800.

those who would have recourse to vile and general abuse;" in the same speech he deprecated the assassination of Bonaparte.

The *Edinburgh Review*¹ said that the great object of the press in England was to make out Bonaparte as very hateful but not very formidable. "We ought to do exactly the reverse." To talk with contempt of the greatest military power the world ever saw is insane, and it is an insult to the loyalty of the people to think that they need stimulants like this to make them oppose Bonaparte; and the *Review* itself sets a good example when dealing with the calumnies of Sir Robert Wilson. It pleads for justice, and maintains that it is unnecessary to seek grounds for hatred in "strange and extravagant" crimes of his.²

The *Quarterly*³ is equally rational. "It is good to see Bonaparte exactly as he is, when we can look back upon his most splendid achievements without danger that admiration shall subside into fear." This is prevented by our late military successes; since the more formidable Bonaparte, the greater must our successes over his armies appear. It then points out that it would be an advantage to show that even if Bonaparte were a Titus, our war is just; therefore it is unnecessary to descant on his crimes, though at the same time his moral obliquities do make him odious.

The Times, whose abuse is so hyperbolically violent

¹ April 1807, on the Dangers of the Country, Vol. X. pp. 8, 9.

² May 1811, the Campaign in Poland: Vol. XVIII. p. 259.

³ October 1811; Vol. VI. p. 59.

that at times we are almost tempted to imagine it a clever parody of the libels heaped on Bonaparte, entertains the same view. It criticizes¹ with ferocity a letter in the *Examiner* which deprecated wanton abuse of Bonaparte, and declared that we should confine ourselves to exposing his ambition, violence and pernicious taste for war ("the exposure would be salutary"). *The Times* rejects such small beer with scorn: it treats the measure of abuse of Bonaparte as the measure of patriotism, and sneers² at "those admirers of his," who object to hearing his vices called murder, rebellion, atheism, adultery.

APPENDIX F

ENGLAND AND AMERICA

JUST for a moment Bonaparte's proud eminence in the hatred of Englishmen was threatened by a rival—Mr. Madison, President of the United States. But *The Times* decided the question in favour of its old favourite, in declaring Bonaparte the patron and Madison the pupil (to make the parallel complete, it had to insist that the government of America was a tyranny), and indignation against America was whetted by the idea that she was a traitor to the "cause of liberty." What assistance, cried Canning,³ "might America have given by refusing to

¹ February 6, 1813.² May 29, 1813.³ *Speeches*, February 18, 1813: Vol. III. p. 389.

administer to the passions, to flatter the hatred of the tyrant, to afford him that new hope of victory and that consolation in defeat which he boasts of deriving from the diversion of our means. . . ." America might have rendered great service to the "glorious struggle in the North" by merely refusing to help Bonaparte. "Who would have expected to see this favourite child of freedom leagued with the oppressor of the world?" and again, in his Liverpool speech, commenting on the fact that it is no glorious republic, but "despotic Russia" that has struck Bonaparte down, he adds: "the only republic is enlisted under Bonaparte." ¹

It is worth noting that in later years Englishmen feared that Bonaparte might escape to America. We can see this in a letter of Croker's (August 8, 1816), where he says that Bonaparte's friends in America, "have money, talents, audacity and despair. What would you have more?" ²

APPENDIX G

EXCESSIVE LAUDATION OF THE "ANCIENT SOCIAL SYSTEM"

LORD COCKBURN, in his *Memorials of his own Times*, speaks of "principles which for twenty years had sunk the whole morality of patriotism in the single object of acknowledging no defect or grievance in our own system," and Wordsworth

¹ *Ibid.* Vol. VI. p. 336.

² *Correspondence and Diaries*, Vol. I. p. 88.

(*Excursion*, Book III.) describes much the same feeling :

“ In Britain ruled a panic dread of change,
The weak were praised, rewarded and advanced.”

The truth of these remarks is well illustrated by the writings and speeches against Napoleon. Numerous contrasts were drawn between the free and happy Englishman and the wretched despot-ridden Frenchman. Nor were Englishmen content with laudation of their own social system. Mr. C. J. R. de D., ¹ who wrote on “ the ogre of Corsica,” describes France in 1789 as a prosperous country “ under the wisest and most lenient laws, laws which had stood the test of centuries,” and *The Times*, in its apostolic reactionary fervour, becomes lyrical in its praise of France under “ Louis le bien-aimé.” To these people Louis XVI. was as much a martyr as Charles I.

Nor were there wanting praises for the weak. Southey ² describes Frederick William IV. as “ Frederick, best and greatest of the name.” A far more striking instance is when Pitt ³ speaks of Paul as “ that wise and vigorous and exalted prince, employing his forces for the deliverance of Europe.” When such were the objects of praise, it was no discredit for Napoleon to be the mark of slander.

¹ But the “ de D ” may denote an *émigré*.

² *Carmen Triumphale*, January 1814.

³ *Speeches*, June 1799 ; Vol. III. p. 81.

APPENDIX H

NAPOLEON'S LOVE OF OSSIAN

IF any Scotsman happened to meet Napoleon, one of the first questions asked him was almost certain to be, "Do you know the works of Ossian?" and he claimed to Lady Malcolm that he had "made them the fashion on the Continent." His love of Ossian was first remarked by Romilly, who, describing the First Consul in 1802, remarks: "His literary taste may seem to give some insight to his character. Ossian is his favourite author." Elsewhere he comments on a French picture of victory introducing dead French heroes to the heroes of Ossian (!). Miss Williams¹ attributes this love of Ossian to the fact that he was a battle poet. After saying that she had felt drawn to Bonaparte in his early days because of his love for Ossian, she continues: "I did not then know that he only valued Ossian for his descriptions of battles." This, however, is denied by the *Quarterly*,² which maintains that he admired Ossian, not as a poet of war, but because he valued "the vague, the dark, the union of natural and supernatural fancies in which his own mind delighted." As the insipidity of the battle-pieces in Ossian is past belief, there is no doubt that the *Quarterly* was right.

Various observers thought that wild scenery exercised an influence over Napoleon. For ex-

¹ *Narrative*, p. 9.

² October 1815: Vol. XIV. p. 94.

ample, Horner writes ¹ in 1800 : “ In all ages, men of heroic views must have drawn the inspirations of genius amidst the solitude and silent wildness of nature : the same disposition insensibly led Mahomet and Bonaparte into the same path.” When he wrote this, Horner had just returned from a visit to the country of Ossian, the Scottish Highlands.

We may note in parenthesis that the influence of Ossian is very apparent in the invective pamphlets directed against Napoleon. Scarratt, in particular, abounds in most Ossianic rhapsodies.

APPENDIX I

HOBHOUSE'S SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH REASONS FOR GOING TO WAR IN 1815—LETTER XIX

MR. C. would save France from a tyrant. Lord F. would disarm France, the tyrant's willing accomplice. Lord G. would fight because the cause is just, though hopeless. Lord C. thinks success certain and advantageous to our claims on France. Mr. — thinks that the return of the Bourbons is the sole guarantee of tranquillity, while Mr. C. G. wonders how the idea got abroad that the object of the Allies was to restore the Bourbons—says we must fight if only to support our Allies; whereas Mr. C. G. says we may not catch them again in the same humour for seconding our designs.

¹ *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 119.

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